



NOT WITHOUT WARNING

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"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. 18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and **thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.** 19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 3:17-19).

The watchman is charged to warn the people when the enemy approaches. If he neglects his duty, that makes him responsible for any harm that befalls the people, but if he warns them, he is free from their blood. We are all watchman on behalf of the souls of mankind. It is our responsibility to warn people so they can be saved (2 Tim. 4:2). To neglect to do so, will cause us to be held responsible for the blood of these individuals.

NOT WITHOUT WARNING deals with teaching I should have understood before I left home to go out into the world on my own. I was naïve. I was vulnerable. I was a target. Perhaps my mother trusted me to have read and studied the scriptures by myself before I was grown, but that did not happen and probably does not with most young girls. Few families actually study scriptures together outside the Bible class or the church assembly. Fewer still use every opportunity to train and teach their children.

Children must be taught. Girls especially need a mother or a grandmother who loves them dearly to take them aside and give them tools for fighting against the wiles of the Devil (Eph. 6:11). My intention in these lessons is to expose the enemy so young girls are not blindsided (1 Pet. 5:8). In a real sense, most of the more sensitive topics deal with issues that should be known intuitively (Rom. 2:14-15); however, knowledge of evil is one thing, and having the armor to combat that evil is quite another.

More than one of the lessons in this series may contain teaching you have never considered before. These lessons are not meant to teach some radical new doctrine, nor are they meant to shock or embarrass anyone. The complete study is meant to get right into the meat of the word of God and to cause women everywhere to reconsider their role in the physical family and in the church family too.

Mothers and daughters, be warned. You have a serious job to do in this life and eternity is long.

Beth Johnson

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VIRTUES AND ATTITUDES

LESSON 1

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting*" (Gal. 6:7-8).

LIVING TO REAP ETERNAL THINGS

We are not to live yielding and sowing to our fleshly desires; we are to live yielding and sowing to a spiritual attitude that is minding spiritual things. Such a mindset will cause us to reap an eternal reward.

We are either in the flesh or we are in the spirit. If we are in Christ, we should be in the spirit. Such individuals do not walk after the flesh, minding the things of the flesh. The "flesh" is a carnal mind that is at enmity with God, and not only reaps corruptible things but death itself. The fleshly mind will always be yielding and sowing according to its desires. Those who are in the spirit walk after the spirit, minding the things of the spirit, yielding and sowing according to the spiritual mind, which reaps life and peace—eternal things (Rom. 8:4-9).

Colossians 3:1-3 tells us that we are to be seeking those things above, having our mind on things above, not on the things of the earth. Our decisions should be made minding spiritual things, with an eye on things above and on how our decisions will affect those eternal things. We should be living and deciding to bring increase to the spiritual and eternal, not the fleshly and temporal. Here is how the Father inspired Jesus to say it. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). Either we decide to do the things that bring earthly treasure or we decide to do the things that bring heavenly treasure.

Galatians 5:17 tells us that the flesh and spirit are contrary one to another. We will either walk after the spirit or we will walk after flesh. We cannot do both. **We should understand that we cannot serve two masters** (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13), because either we live to satisfy our fleshly desires that bring treasure on earth, or we live to sow to the Spirit, bear the fruit of the Spirit and build treasure in heaven.

We should be those who have put to death the affections and lusts of the flesh, living and walking in the spirit (Gal. 5:24-25). Our decisions should reflect this. Our daily decisions should **not** suggest that we are yielding to the affections and lusts of the flesh, but should suggest our desire to have eternal treasure in heaven.

Do we not know and understand that sowing to the flesh to satisfy its lusts, laying up treasure on earth, and being a friend of the world makes us an enemy of God? Do we want to make decisions that make us a friend of the world and an enemy of God (James 4:1-4)? Either we love the world or the Heavenly Father, but we cannot love both. Do our decisions suggest a love for the world and the things it offers or a love for the Father and His things? We need to be living for eternal things and not the temporal (1 John 2:15-17). What decisions would we make each day as we keep this principle in mind? Let us make the decisions that would bring eternal treasure—not the temporary satisfaction of the fleshly desires.

LIVING BY FAITH; LOVING GOOD & HATING EVIL

In order to be just or righteous, we must live by faith (Rom. 1:16-17). The Lord's admonition to us is to walk by faith and not by sight. As we live and walk through life, making decisions along the way, we need to make sure the decisions are made by faith that our Heavenly Father knows what is best for us in every case (2 Cor. 5:7). Faith is the substance (confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction) of things not seen, being persuaded of the promises of God (Heb. 11:1, 13). **Faith (in God), what we believe, can only come by the word of God.** To live and walk by faith is to live and walk by God's direction in His word. To make decisions in faith is to make decisions based on the word of God, the scripture (Rom. 10:17).

We need to remember that His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). To be wise we must turn from the wisdom of this world (walking by sight) and count it as foolishness. To walk by our own thoughts and wisdom and experience, or the philosophies of men, is to walk by sight and is foolishness with God (1 Cor. 3:18-19). For an example: the world tells us to sow to the flesh; live for today and for this life; eat, drink and be merry. But the Lord says sow to the spirit, live for the reward of everlasting life in eternity (Gal. 6:8).

The rich man walked by sight using his own wisdom (that of the world), laying up treasure for himself. Instead he should have lived by faith, according to God's direction, by being rich in good works toward God and laying up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:16-21).

Using his own wisdom, King Saul offered a sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:15, 22-23); however, it was done in disobedience, and the Lord rejected that sacrifice and Saul himself. To walk according to His word, in faith and in obedience, has always been what is necessary and important.

Sometimes walking by faith requires taking the strong meat of God's word and exercising our senses to discern good and evil (Heb. 5:14). We must not use our own judgment to decide. There may be many times when something may seem good to us, but we must use the word of God as our criteria for evaluation. We are to love righteousness and hate iniquity (evil) just as Jesus did (Heb. 1:8-9). As we make decisions, our choices should be toward good and righteousness and against iniquity and evil. It is only through His word that we can discern what is good and what is evil. We are not to seek evil, but hate it; we are to love good and seek it (Amos 5:14-15). What do our decisions say about us? Do we truly want what is good, or are we going after our own fleshly desires? **We are to abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).**

The love of money or a desire to be rich is the **root** of all evil (1 Tim. 6:9-10). We should especially be careful about this temptation. What does the wisdom of this world tell us? Would the one walking by sight acknowledge this?

Do we want to be one who is of God or one who has not seen God (3 John 11)? As we come to decisions in life, we need to follow that which is good and not that which is evil. If we abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good, which direction will our decisions take us (Rom. 12:9)?

We need to realize the whole world lies in wickedness (evil) and we need to be on guard constantly (1 John 5:19). Will we allow ourselves to marry or otherwise be unequally yoked together with the unbelievers or the wicked people of the world? It doesn't take much to be a partaker of evil deeds; we should be careful where our decisions lead us (2 John 11).

SEEKING GOOD OF OTHERS, NOT SEEKING OUR OWN GOOD—BEING A LIGHT

We are not to seek or love the praise of men. We are not to live and make decisions simply to gain man's approval and honor. Instead we are to make the decisions that would gain God's praise (Rom. 2:28-29)—even seek to have God's praise. **We cannot disregard man even though we are not to seek the praise of man.** We are to provide things honest (good) in the sight of all men, living peaceably if it be possible (Rom. 12:17-18).

Peacemakers are among the blessed. In making decisions, we need to consider the impact of our decisions on others (Matt. 5:9). In lowliness of mind, we are to esteem others better than ourselves, looking on the things of others and not our own. We are to be a servant like Jesus was, ministering to others as opposed to expecting others to minister to us (Phil. 2:3-8). **We are not to seek our own but the good of others; we are not to insist on doing something (simply because it is our "right" and does not break any law) without regard to its impact on others.** We must consider its effect on others—whether it is expedient and whether it edifies (1 Cor. 10:23-24). We are even to let our liberty be judged of another's conscience, as we do all to the glory of God. We are not to seek our own profit, but the profit of others that they may be saved, and definitely never give any offence (1 Cor. 10:29-33).

We are not to make any decision that would lead to putting a stumbling block in our brother's way; we are not to do anything that would make our brother stumble, offend, or become weak. Instead we are to follow after the ways that make for peace and that edify (Rom. 14:13, 19, 21). **Just proving something is lawful and/or politically correct, does not give us license or the right to do it.** To be determined to do such a thing without considering its impact on others is to be puffed up in knowledge without love (1 Cor. 8:1-13). Love demands that we consider the impact of our decisions and our actions on the lives of others. Love demands we make the decision that edifies the other. Failing in this is no small matter; such can cause a weak brother to perish by sinning against Christ.

Our decisions need to demonstrate several attitudes and actions toward others (Christian brothers and sisters in this context). We need to demonstrate compassion, love, being pitiful and courteous, rendering blessings and not evil for evil or railing for railing, refraining our tongues from evil and our lips from speaking guile—seeking peace (1 Pet. 3:8-11).

Our study has brought us back to Romans 12:17-21. Our decisions need to be toward providing things honest or good in the sight of all men. One way we do this is never to repay evil with evil, never avenge ourselves but provide things honest, pursue peace, give place to wrath, overcome evil with good. We are to be as the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). Do our actions and our decisions reflect this? In making any decision, will we be shining forth as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (Phil. 2:15)?

QUESTIONS:

Part A: Please give full sentence answers. Sometimes more than one sentence will be required. Each answer will be worth 5 points.

1. What are we supposed to crucify according to Galatians 5:24-25? What will that include? There are two parts to this question.
2. According to Galatians 5:17, what causes us not to be able to do the things we want to do?
3. According to James 4:1-4, what causes wars and fighting?
4. Where should we place our affections? (Col. 3:1-3)
5. What happens to treasures we lay up for ourselves on earth? (Matt. 6:19-21)
6. How do we know the love of our Heavenly Father is not in someone (1 John 2:15-17)?
7. Explain what it means to "walk after the flesh." Contrast that manner of life with "walking after the spirit." (Rom. 8:4-9) **There are two parts to this question.**

Part B: Fill in the blanks with the correct word or phrase. Sometimes I am asking for a scripture reference. Each answer will be worth 2 points.

1. Abstain from all appearance of _____ (1 Thess. 5:22).
2. According to the parable of the rich man in _____, we cannot say, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry."
3. The prophet _____ said, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."
4. And _____ said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.
5. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in _____.
6. We see that the verse, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" is found in _____.

7. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their _____ exercised to discern both good and evil.
8. But they that will be _____ fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.
9. For the love of _____ is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
10. But unto the _____ he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
11. For he that biddeth _____ God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.
12. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap _____.
13. The just shall live by _____.
14. For we walk by faith, not by _____.
15. Let love be without _____. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.
16. For the wisdom of this world is _____ with God.
17. Now _____ is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
18. Hate the _____, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate.
19. So then _____ cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17).
20. If I walk after the _____, I will do what makes me happy or what feels good.
21. Should we get even or take revenge on someone who hurts us? Why not?

Part C: Use the list of scriptures in the section below to identify the scriptures written afterward. Each answer will be worth 2 points.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

1 Peter 3:8-11

Romans 2:28-29

Philippians 2:3-8

Philippians 2:15

Matthew 5:9

Matthew 5:13-16

1 Corinthians 10:29-33

Romans 12:17-21

1 Corinthians 10:23-24

Romans 12:17-18

Romans 14:13, 19, 21

1. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.
2. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
3. Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.
4. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.
5. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.
6. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
7. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way....Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.... It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.
8. Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to

know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him. As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

9. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
10. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
11. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.
12. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

CONDUCT OR BEHAVIOR

LESSON 2

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. **Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.** Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will **with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.** Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say (1 Cor. 10:6-15).

In scripture, not one story of sexual relations outside of marriage has a happy ending. Shame is heaped upon the parties that willfully participate in fornication. Lot's daughters chose wrongfully—to their shame and thus brought about two nations who were at odds with Israel (Gen. 19:30-38). Sarah encouraged Abraham to take a second wife and it brought about strife within the family and brought about another nation that would trouble God's chosen people later (Gen.16). Shechem fell in love with Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. He took her and had relations with her without marrying her. This act brought about his death and that of his father and all of the men of his city (Gen. 34). One widely-known story is the one of King David with Bathsheba. He saw her; he desired her and he took her. The end result was a man murdered and child not allowed by God to live (2 Sam. 11-12:23). I could go on and on. God makes it clear from the beginning that the sexual relationship is a special one that should be treated as such.

Read Deutoronomy 22:13-21.

1. Were the woman and her parents to be prepared to defend her claim of purity (Deut. 22:15-17)?
2. Once false charges were proven as false, was the husband allowed to do this to her again at some time in the future (Deut. 22:18-19)?

3. If the charges were proven to be true, what would happen to the woman (Deut. 22:20-21)? Why? What did this accomplish?

Read Deuteronomy 22:22-30

4. What would happen to a man and a married woman found lying together (Deut. 22:22)? What did this accomplish?

5. If a man finds an engaged girl in the city, and lies with her what is to be done with them (Deut. 22:23-24)? Why? What does this accomplish?

6. If a man finds an engaged girl out away from the city, forces her and lies with her, what will happen to them (Deut. 22:25-27)? What is this compared to in verse 26? Was there any sin in her in this instance?

7. Does God make a distinction between the woman who tries to stop such a thing but is unable to find help and the woman who could have found help and did not seek it?

8. If a man finds a virgin girl, who is not engaged, and lies with her, what should happen to them (Deut. 22:28-29)? Having started their relationship this way, can he ever put her away?

There are protections given for the young woman who does **not** choose to have relations outside of marriage; however, if she consciously makes the choice to violate that purity, she is condemned to death. There's no comment of how many times she has done such a thing for her to be said to have "played the harlot". One time, **by choice** outside the bonds of marriage, or many times results in being a harlot. **God puts a great value on a woman's purity. He condemns men who will take it away forcefully, and He condemns the woman who gives it away willingly.**

The Shulammite woman in *Song of Solomon* called herself a "wall" (Song of Solomon 8:10). Her brothers said "We have a little sister, and she has no breasts; what shall we do for our sister on the day when she is spoken for? If she is a wall, we will build on her a battlement of silver; but if she is a door we will barricade her with planks of cedar" (Song of Solomon 8:8-9).

Until she's of age, they will build up her defenses. If she's already a sturdy wall, they will supplement that. But if she's a *door*, then they will board her up with strong boards. When she was older ("my breasts were like towers") she called herself a wall. She protected herself. Her breasts were not welcome signs; they were towers. Towers on buildings are designed to keep people out and make it hard to get to the top. **She protected herself after it was no longer her brothers' responsibility.**

It is quite unfortunate that many brothers and sisters today do not feel the same protectiveness for young girls. Not only do girls sometimes have evil, worldly siblings, but some parents also appear to live vicariously through these young, vulnerable children. Some may turn their heads when they see

problems developing or they may write the behavior off as “just an age” they are going through. The most base of all will actually set the girls up for encounters—sometimes even for money. If a family will not protect its girls, these young ones must seek help from genuine Christians in the church who know the value of God’s word. Even if the family tries to protect them, they all still must turn to their Heavenly Father for His guidance. Let us see a few other accounts and commands that involve **how to maintain purity**.

Tamar kept her head when in a frightening and distressing circumstance (2 Sam. 13:1-23). She did everything she could to prevent what Amnon intended. She knew that no matter how much he **said** he loved her (2 Sam 13:1) if he would do this without making her his wife, he was disgracing them both (2 Sam. 13:11-13). His true desires were shown after he violated her. Under the Old Law, he still could have married her, but he threw her away without any care for her at all. This was an even greater disgrace and misuse of Tamar (2 Sam. 13:15-16). She valued her purity; he did not.

There are many places to go to study this topic—Proverbs 5 is all about avoiding the pitfalls of fornication/adultery. Just because it’s written to a male does not mean that the same principles do not apply to a female!

Proverbs 6:20-35 is much the same as chapter 5. Wise King Solomon obviously saw the dangers of the flesh as something to drive home to his student! The one committing adultery is compared to a thief. If you know it’s wrong to steal a candy bar from a store, then you should also know that it’s wrong to take away from a married woman what is rightfully hers—her husband’s attention (1 Cor. 7:1-5).

Remember Philippians 4:8-9: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think** (meditate-BJ) on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

And James 3:16-18, “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

Temptations stay farthest away when one is too busy doing good works to give the temptation any time to fester in the heart.

- **“Flee fornication.** Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18).

- **"Flee also youthful lusts:** but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22).
- "Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil,** and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

FROM WHAT (PARTICULARLY) DO YOUNG WOMEN NEED TO FLEE?

To be a "gold" vessel, we must flee youthful lusts. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. **Flee also youthful lusts:** but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:19-22).

Greek #1939. *epithumia*, ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah; from G1937; a longing (especially for what is forbidden):--concupiscence, desire, lust (after). #1937. *epithumeo*, ep-ee-thoo-meh'-o; from G1909 and G2372; to set the heart upon, i.e. long for (rightfully or otherwise):--covet, desire, would fain, lust (after).

What parts of lust are described in 1 John 2:16-17? The Holy Spirit through John says, "For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh**, and the **lust of the eyes**, and **the pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

WHAT HOPE IS THERE FOR THE YOUNG WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THESE SINS?

What if you only now have realized what the Heavenly Father thinks of the way you have been living, is there any hope? Acts 2:38 says: Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and **be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. You can be like Paul (1 Tim. 1:15) and put the past behind you. **Repentance must come first**—a total change of mind (a new mind) and **a determination to live for Christ and not for self**. Then baptism forgives your sins and you start life anew with that determination to serve Him and live for Him. It will not be easy to change, but constant study and associating yourself with true Christians will help you grow as a Christian.

COULD I BE CALLED A CHRISTIAN?

Jones Samuel

Could I be called a Christian
If everybody knew
My secrets, thoughts and feelings
And everything I do?
Oh could they see the likeness
Of Christ in me each day?
Oh could they hear him speaking
In every word I say?

Could I be called a Christian
If everyone could know
That I am found in places
Where Jesus would not go?
Oh could they hear his echo
In every song I sing?
In eating, drinking, dressing
Could they see Christ in me?

Could I be called a Christian
If judged by what I read
By all my recreations
And every thought and deed?
Could I be counted Christ-like
As now I work and pray
Unselfish, kind, forgiving
To others every day?

Disclaimer:

From the time I was a young girl (nearly 70 years ago), I have owned a copy of the poem, "Could I be Called a Christian," bearing the author's name—Jones Samuel. Recently I have seen the same poem printed in a popular Christian magazine with the authorship attributed to a woman much younger than I. You be the judge (BJ).

QUESTIONS:

Write out the answers for the 8 questions (# 1-8) that are in the first part of the lesson, then finish these as well.

9. According to 1 Corinthians 10:1-11, should a disciple of Christ follow God's judgments that are recorded in the Old Testament scriptures?
10. What was God's judgment against the adulterer in the Old Testament scriptures?
11. Though the Law of Moses no longer rules over men, has God's judgment of evil changed?
12. What was God's judgment concerning the fornicator in the New Testament (1 Cor. 5:1-11)?
13. What does God say about those who commit adultery (Gal. 5:19-21)?
14. What is God's judgment of a person who doesn't commit adultery but in their heart they would like to (Matt. 5:27-28)?
15. According to Proverbs 3, 5 and 7, can wisdom protect a person from fornication?
16. According to 1 Corinthians 7:1-6, what is a good defense against fornication?
17. From the account of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13, when a man 'feels' like he loves a woman and tells her he loves her, is that love always genuine love or can it be lust of the flesh?
18. What is the only way a person can sin against his physical body (1 Cor. 6:18)?
19. Though Timothy was a righteous man, was he tempted to follow the desires of youth?
20. Should the wise person fear and flee evil like Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife, or should they consider the feelings of the person who seeks to cause them to commit fornication?
21. What is the promise God gives us if we resist evil (James 4:7)?
22. How can you prepare yourself to be a vessel of honor (2 Tim. 2:20-21)?
23. If a person gives in to the temptation to commit fornication, is he a

vessel unto honor?

24. What does God promise is going to happen to every deed and word on Judgment Day (Eccl. 12:14)?
25. What does God promise to do to the young person who walks in the ways of his own heart (Eccl. 11:9-10)?
26. According to 1 Timothy 4:12, what were the six things Timothy was told to be, as an example to the believers?
27. Will we seek the praise of men or of God if we are a Jew inwardly and have our hearts "circumcised" in the spirit and not in the letter (Rom. 2:29)?
28. How can a young man (or woman) cleanse his/her way (Psa. 119:9)?
29. **How can a young girl maintain her safety and her purity in a culture based on sexual immorality?**
30. To whom should she turn for help to change her life if she has sinned?

OUR DRESS AND OUR SPEECH

LESSON 3

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON YOUTHFUL LUSTS?

Focusing on the outward instead of the inward man, attempting to appeal to others by physical beauty or attire and immodesty are common temptations for females. Face it: as young girls, you're as beautiful as you'll ever be in your life. It's a very **real temptation to be proud** of that, and want everyone to notice! But BEWARE! "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised" (Pro. 31:30).

If we learn to trust in our own beauty when we are young, to use and abuse it, we are trusting in something fleeting and deceitful. Every one of us will get old, and our beauty will fade. Then what are we left with? We are left with what we REALLY are: our real selves, our heart and our character. People probably still see our flaws in spite of a pretty face! The pretty face just makes our character flaws that much more glaring! "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion" (Pro. 11:22).

Which is wiser, spending two hours in front of the mirror moaning over a pimple and getting exactly the right look from an outfit, or spending that same time focusing on reading the Bible or doing a good work? Which one is lasting? He tells us that directly: **"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible"** (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

WE NEED TO PAY SOME ATTENTION TO OUR OUTWARD MAN.

- "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17b).
 - 2570 - kalos = beautiful outwardly (this is the word the Greek interlinear provides - 1 Tim 2:9 - let the women adorn - 2885 same meaning as 2887 and 'modest' in the same verse is 2887 - thus the definition and application immediately below would work there)
 - 2887. Orderly (**modest**), i.e. **decorous**:--of good behaviour, modest.
 - *decorum: propriety and good taste in behavior, speech, dress, formality in rules of conduct or behavior established as suitable to the circumstances; decency—propriety, dignity, in keeping with self-respect*

Notice the message Paul gives Timothy for the church in Ephesus. First of all, he tells Timothy to warn all the Ephesians not to teach any other doctrine or follow fables or endless genealogies, which can only gender strife.

Then he turns to the women in particular to warn them about their common temptations. You will see several warnings about what to do and what not to do. We must understand what he is saying in order to obey. He says, "In like manner also, that women **adorn themselves** in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; **not with** broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; **But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works**" (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Note particularly the word *shamefacedness* as it is defined in the 'print screen' picture below. We must not forget this important detail. See a JPG of the Greek interlinear of this passage:

1 Tim 2:9-10

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with **shamefacedness** and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;
10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

1 Tim 2:9-11 Strong's Interlinear

9	ὡσαύτως	[καί]	γυναῖκας	ἐν	καταστολῇ	κοσμίῳ	μετὰ	αἰδοῦς	καί	σωφροσύνης	κοσμεῖν	
	5615	2532	9999	1135	1722	2689	2887	3326	127	2532	4997	2885
	5615	2532	9999	1135	1722	2689	2887	3326	127	2532	4997	2885
	BX	BX		NFPA	PD	NFSD	JFSDX	PG	NFSG	CCK	NFSG	V_PAN
	In like manner	also,	that	women	in	apparel,	modest	with	shamefacedness	and	sobriety;	adorn
	ἑαυτάς,	μὴ	ἐν	πλέγμασιν	καὶ	χρυσίῳ	ἢ	μαργαρίταις	ἢ	ἱματισμῷ	πολυτελεῖ,	
	1438	3361	1722	4117	<2228>	<5557>	2228	3135	2228	2441	4185	
	1438	3361	1722	4117	<2532>	<5553>	2228	3135	2228	2441	4185	
	OX3FPA	TN	PD	NNPD	CCK	NNSD	CCD	NMPD	CCD	NMSD	JMSDX	
	themselves	not	with	broided hair,	or	gold,	or	pearls,	or	array;	costly	
10	ἀλλ'	ὅ	πρέπει	γυναῖξιν	ἐπαγγελλομέναις	θεοσεβείαν,	δι'	ἔργων	ἀγαθῶν.			
	235	3739	<516>	1135	1861	2317	1223	2041	18			
	235	3739	<4241>	1135	1861	2317	1223	2041	18			
	CCV	ORRNSN	V3SPAI	NFPD	V_PMPFPD	NFSA	PG	NNPG	JNPGX			
	But	(which	becometh	women	professing	godliness)	with	works.	good			
11	Γυνή	ἐν	ἡσυχίᾳ	μανθανέτω	ἐν	πάσῃ	ὑποταγῇ					
	9999	1135	1722	2271	3129	1722	3956	5292				
	9999	1135	1722	2271	3129	1722	3956	5292				
	NFSN	PD	NFSD	V3SPAM	PD	JFSDX	NFSD					
	the	woman	in	silence	Let learn	with	all	subjection.				

(Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.) [For more detail see the full copyright page.]

NT:127 αἰδώς *aidos* (ahee-doce'); perhaps from NT:1 (as a negative particle) and NT:1492 (through the idea of downcast eyes); **bashfulness**, i.e. (towards men), modesty or (towards God) awe:

When women of any age **"look them in the eye"** they are inviting trouble. Because of the man's temptation, he will often make approaches to the woman even if there was no evil intention on her part. However, there is that certain look that nobody can mistake which girls should never give. Our culture has conditioned ladies to be bold toward everyone, even the men. Only trouble can follow.

Immodest apparel suggests that you don't value or respect yourself enough to keep your beauty for special use. Remember that fine china is for special occasion, dime store plastic is for anything you want. You're making your beauty not only **CHEAP**, but **FREE** if you're using it *indiscriminately*.

Promiscuity is characterized by lack of discrimination, without plan or purpose, casual. "But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was" (Ezek. 16:15).

MODESTY DEFINED

"But," somebody says, "It's **socially acceptable** to wear T-shirts that are so tight the only thing left to the imagination is skin color variation! That's just the style, and nobody notices me above anyone else." OK, let's all move to Africa and go topless! Would God approve if you fit in with the crowd there?

Modesty isn't determined by those around us; it's determined by GOD. Our society has been **conditioned** into such a lack of discretion they think certain things like miniskirts, shorts, halter-tops, bikinis, and so on are OK. The topless natives in Africa are just a step further than we are; that's all. But face it, even the world (according to Webster's Dictionary) says immodesty is "to expose or highlight one's body in a bold or forward way—opposite of shy or humble." That covers a lot of territory!

WHAT IS THE RATIONALE BEHIND IMMODESTY?

WHY do people wear tight or revealing clothes? They do it **because** they think they **look good** in it! They get noticed! Why? Other people enjoy seeing them that way, of course! They get compliments, etc. **That is sensual pleasure others don't even have to pay for!**

WHAT IS THE RATIONALE BEHIND MODESTY?

As Christians, we should WANT to dress modestly, as God commands. Aside from that, as **women**, we need to have enough self-respect to dress modestly. We need to err on the side of caution, not on the side of wantonness! If someone says something to us about what we are wearing (including our old fashioned parents!) and we get defensive, we'd better beware! Why does wearing it matter so much? Could we be seeking the praise of men? **If** that's not our reason, then we'll be willing to accept the suggestion, and be *fine* with changing to something else!

Consider the following bulletin article:

WHAT'S SHE SELLING?

Dillard Thurman

May 8, 1964

As I passed by a show window, my eye was attracted by a charming display of suits in the window. Each was set off to its best advantage and was so placed as to attract attention from every passerby. I gathered that the merchant was trying to sell suits.

I passed another building and in the window and around the outside of the building, I saw the latest models of automobiles. Each was attractively placed and each shown to its best advantage. I gathered that he was trying to sell automobiles.

As I passed a fruit stand, I was attracted by the glistening beauty of the fruit for the vendor had each one polished and only the most appealing was set out for display. I surmised that he was trying to sell fruit.

As I went on, I passed a pretty young woman. She was also very attractive. Special care had been employed to fix her hair in the latest fashion, her face was done just right; even her nails were painted. But the display didn't stop there. The latest "form aids" were enticingly used to effectively attract the attention of every male and all hindrances had been removed so as not to obstruct the view of the merchandise, for the pert young miss was hardly more than half-clothed! With her "wares" so openly displayed before everyone, I had to ask, "What is she trying to sell?"

For Christian women, it was said, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:3-4). A good woman will desire to advertise different merchandise than the "woman of the street." Her display will be godliness and sobriety, not lustful enticements.

I heard an elder's timely retort to that old charge that "Your mind is just in the gutter." He replied, "If my mind is in the gutter, just remember who put it there." That is an apt rebuttal against some of these "broad-minded" ones who persist in wearing clothes that hide very little. When our mother Eve ate the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," she immediately put on clothes to hide her nakedness. When I see women under-dressed or in lewd attire, I am persuaded that they have not eaten of that fruit and

are still woefully ignorant. And in this conclusion, I am only trying to be charitable.

View a relevant video on *House-to-House and Heart to Heart* Website.

(<http://www.housetohouse.com/MediaPlayer.aspx?media=6997>)

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF IMMODESTY ON A MARRIAGE?

How will being vain or immodest affect your relationship with your husband? It cheapens it. Your body doesn't just belong to him; it belongs to anyone who cares to look. We might as well work at Hooters or one of the topless pizza bars! At least *they* have enough self-respect to ask for pay for their displays! **Save your body for his eyes only**, the way God meant it from the beginning. That is part of the beauty of marriage! Then take his breath away!

Girls and women will defend their immodesty by saying that nothing but skimpy clothing is sold in the department stores. Can you learn to sew for modesty's sake or even for economy? Can you shop in a second-hand store or online to find older styles, more modest than the modern clothing? We can if we will and if it is important to us to obey all the commands of God? We can find a way if we want to.

SPEECH OUR HEAVENLY FATHER EXPECTS

Have you ever seen a beautiful girl who suddenly became ugly as soon as she opened her mouth? "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion" (Pro. 11:22). Does she use the world's terms like OMG or Jeez? Is the topic she speaks of suggestive or vulgar every time she opens her mouth? "A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing" (Prov. 9:13). Does her speech make you understand her heart better? Is that heart turned toward the Lord and His ways or toward the world? **Notice the full implication of an evil tongue, and remember our hearts are being revealed.**

- "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That **every idle word** that men shall speak, **they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.** For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:34-37).

- “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:” (Matt. 15:18-19).

The "besetting sin" most frequently attributed women is in the misuse of the tongue. Whether they are more guilty of this sin than men is not really the point. Rather than casting blame at anyone in particular, we all ought to take a close look at our own actions.

See the three comparisons in James 3:1-12, which show the great power of the tongue.

“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Behold, we put **bits in the horses' mouths**, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the **ships**, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they **turned about with a very small helm**, whithersoever the governor listeth. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! **6 And the tongue is a fire**, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.”

Look carefully at the seven things the Lord hates and notice how many of those are sins of the tongue. “These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, **a lying tongue**, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 **A false witness that speaketh lies**, and **he that soweth discord among brethren**” (Pro. 6:16-19).

One of the qualifications of a deacon's wife relates to her use of the tongue. As a leader of the people it is important that she not be given to this kind of sin. “Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things?” (1 Tim. 3:11). Can it be said of you that “She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness” (Prov. 31:26).

DO WE HAVE LIPS OF KNOWLEDGE?

- “There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel” (Prov. 20:15).
- **The Lord is the one who teaches or does not teach man His knowledge.** “He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity” (Psa. 94:10-11).
- “All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it” (Pro. 8:8-11).
- **God describes knowledge as a crown for our head.** “The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge” (Pro. 14:18).
- **Dispersing knowledge is like giving out precious jewels. “The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so”** (Pro. 15:7).
- **If we have any understanding at all we will seek more and more knowledge.** “The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness” (Pro. 15:14).
- **If we are prudent we will increase in the knowledge of God.** “The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge” (Pro. 18:15).
- **Once we get knowledge we need to understand it.** “Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge (Pro. 19:25).
- **To get understanding we must accept reproof. When the wise are instructed they receive knowledge.** “When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge (Pro. 21:11).

These are the positive things we need to strive for, but there are also some things we should avoid, even flee.

NOT A GOSSIP

- Greek 1228.:--false accuser
- "Even so must their wives be grave, not **slanderers**, sober, faithful in all things" (1 Tim. 3:11).
- "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (Pro. 17:9).

Will your husband be able to tell you things that he knows will not be passed along to others? Can he truly confide in you—sharing the secrets of his heart?

NOT ARGUMENTATIVE OR STUBBORNLY OPINIONATED

- "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house" (Pro. 21:9).
- "A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping" (Pro. 19:13).
- "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him" (Pro. 29:20). Girls, this includes US too!
- "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards" (Pro. 29:11).
- "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19).
- "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Pro. 31:26).

NOT A DISCOURAGEMENT

- "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (1 Cor. 7:16).
- "Let every one of us please his neighbour for **his** good to edification" (Rom. 15:2).
- "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Prov. 17:22).

Let us pray that we learn to use our tongues wisely and not in such a

way as to cause shame or discouragement. Let us work to tame our tongues and cleanse our hearts from those ugly things that would come out of our mouths.

Questions:

1. What are some common youthful lusts?
2. Define modesty? Who determines what is modest?
3. What is immodesty? Who determines what is immodest?
4. Name at least three (3) common temptations for young girls?
5. What beauty is lasting (Pro. 11:22 & Pro. 31:30)?
6. Which adornment is lasting (1 Pet. 3:3-4)?
7. What attention should we pay to our outer man (Rom. 12:17b)?
8. Name four (4) things women should adorn (1 Tim 2:9-10).
9. Name four (4) things women should not adorn (1 Tim 2:9-10).
10. Define shamefacedness as seen in (1 Tim 2:9-10).
11. What does immodest apparel suggest?
12. Define promiscuity (Eze. 16:15).
13. Why do women wear immodest, tight or revealing clothes?
14. Why should Christian women want to dress and behave modestly?
15. What are the effects of immodesty on a marriage or on the church as a whole?
16. If you really want to, can you acquire more modest clothing in a world where styles are mostly immodest?

17. Explain how a woman can change her image when she talks (Pro. 11:22, 9:13).
18. How is a woman's heart revealed (Matt. 12:34-37; 15:18-19)?
19. What "besetting sin" is usually attributed to women?
20. What three things are compared to the tongue in James 3:1-6?
21. What seven things does the Lord hate (Prov. 6:16-19)? Write the sins that have to do with the use of the tongue.
22. Name one qualification for a deacon that has to do with his wife (1 Tim. 3:11).
23. Write (quote) Psalm 94:10-11 from memory. Explain the meaning.
24. How do we get understanding (Pro. 21:11)?
25. In this passage, from what sin of the tongue should we flee (Pro. 17:9)?
26. Tell why the sin in Proverbs 21:9 is wrong.
27. Explain how James 1:19 relates to your speech.
28. How can women use their tongues for encouragement (1 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 15:2; Pro. 17:22)?

FOCUSING ON THE OPPOSITE SEX, DATING AND FLIRTING

Lesson 4

As children pass into adulthood, one of the accepted institutions of our modern society is dating. Boyfriend/girlfriend relationships are expected and often encouraged by parents, relatives and friends. Yet dating can be one of the most spiritually perilous and challenging periods in a person's life, with possible ramifications that span an entire lifetime and likely beyond. Are there things we need to know before approaching this stage in our lives? What do the Scriptures say specifically about dating?

Well, actually, the Scriptures do not say anything about dating.

That's right. The Scriptures say nothing about dating, at least not by *name*, because this practice as we know it has only come into existence in the last century. Before this time, marriages were arranged by parents or older relatives, and relationships between opposite sexes outside of marriage were strictly prohibited—taboo. Even today, many cultures still hold to this tradition. Shouldn't this fact alone cause us to re-examine dating with thoughtful scrutiny instead of blasé acceptance? But while the Scriptures don't specifically use the term *dating*, they do speak extensively by principle and implication on the topic, and we would be well served to consider God's direction before approaching a practice that could carry with it such lasting consequences.

What is dating? Originally, this practice was promoted as the best means by which a person could independently find and assess a member of the opposite sex as suitable for marriage. However, since its inception, dating in the United States has been eroded to a practice that has little to do with marriage, and more to do with short-term recreation. Dr. Joy Browne states, "The purpose of dating is simple: getting to know someone and letting that person get to know you so you can decide whether you're interested in spending any more time together. Put aside the notion that you're looking for a mate, or a one night stand, or someone to please your mother. After all, dating should be fun. It's not like your whole life or livelihood depends on one or several dates." (*Dating for Dummies*, 3rd edition, Dr. Joy Browne, PhD, Wiley Publishing, Inc. 2011 p. 1)

Does this fit with the biblical, God ordained picture of a sober-minded young person's outlook before marriage? Let's explore the modern institution of dating just a little further before we compare it to what we find between the covers of God's Word.

WHAT IS THE REALITY OF MODERN DATING?

Dating concentrates on the here and now, and on personal satisfaction. If two people should happen to like each other enough, a date could possibly lead to a conditional commitment later—that condition being a self-seeking, demanding condition: if you cease to please me, or if you even cease to provide me with excitement, I’m perfectly justified in moving on to the next *experience*. Compare this short-sighted outlook to the Lord’s admonition in Proverbs 4:26: “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.” Instead living for today, our thoughts should be, “How will this moment affect the rest of my life? What direction are these footsteps leading me?” Dating for fun dangerously narrows our focus to the present moment (Eccl. 11:9–12:1).

The practice of making and breaking multiple relationships promotes an unfettered and carefree, yet somehow grim and distrustful outlook in the young person (who, we must be reminded, is *supposed* to be *having fun*). It instills in a heart the lack of faithfulness and steadfastness: if things don’t work out, “Oh, well. There’s always the next one.” So later, if a marriage is no longer perceived as fulfilling, the person’s vows may mean as little as all those sweet nothings whispered to multiple boyfriends before they were married! Compare our culture’s *multiple relationship* model with God’s thought on the seriousness of promises made between a man and a woman in Malachi 2: 11–16. How do you suppose God judges the actions of a *heart-breaker*? Dating can decimate fidelity.

Some believe relationships ought to be based on chemistry, yet *chemistry* may not be what we are led to expect. Just what do we mean when we talk about *chemistry*? Kuriansky says the term is defined as, “...physiological reactions (which are) triggered in attraction...You spot her across the room and know she’s the one. His eyes meet yours and you melt...Your heart pounds and a thrill rushes through...You want to be close, and you know it’s that *chemistry*...” (*The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Dating*, 3rd edition, Dr. Judy Kuriansky, Alpha Publishing, 2003, p. 20).

The Bible calls this thrill lust (Matt. 5:28). A relationship based on *chemistry*, may be as fleeting as the emotion that drives it. Recall Amnon and poor Tamar in 2 Samuel, chapter 13. As many older couples can testify, *lasting* love is not about emotion or chemistry; it is a multifaceted quality based on trust, commitment, faithfulness, serving one another in selflessness, bearing with one another’s faults in honor and respect, and so much more. *Genuine* love doesn’t hit like a lightning bolt: it is nurtured and grown. *True* love never fails. (I Cor. 13:4–8).

Dating presents situations which necessarily complicate, not enhance, our efforts to evaluate another’s true character and suitability for marriage. As two people relate intimately, passion interferes

with clear thinking. It is well documented that a heightened state of excitement causes the body to release certain hormones and chemicals, among them adrenalin, (the *fight or flight hormone*, which shunts blood *away* from the brain and stomach to better supply the heart and major muscles,) phenylethylamine (the *natural high* chemical,) oxytocin (the *amnesia/bonding* hormone) and endorphins (pleasure chemicals). All of these chemicals or hormones apparently have one thing in common: they reduce the effectiveness of the brain for normal thought! So the very act (of being intimately alone) that is supposed to assist in clearer understanding and evaluation your date, in reality does the exact opposite. Dating can render us senseless (Pro. 7:21-23).

Modern dating, by its opportunity to fulfill romantic and emotional needs, may postpone a person's desire to marry and to become responsible to care for a family. Instead, as it fulfills the immediate needs of the individual, it allows for an unnaturally extended childhood before the *distasteful* responsibility of marriage and *getting serious about life* is thrust upon a person. Is it any wonder the divorce rate is so high nowadays? We have been duped by our society into believing that the value and beauty of *true* love in a *purposeful* life isn't worth the responsibility it necessitates. Instead, we believe in the hoax of instant happiness through little counterfeit *marriages*, which we call *going steady*. When all is said and done, what is left of a person's life for the beauty of marriage? (Pro. 5:1-23, 1 Tim. 5:8) Dating robs from marriage.

WHAT ABOUT CASUAL FLIRTING AND PLATONIC RELATIONSHIPS, WITH MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX?

Christian college campuses, Bible Chair facilities and church youth groups are rife with these *platonic relationships*. Every day one may see young people laughing and talking intimately, lounging around, hugging each other, their heads in each other's laps, or giving each other shoulder massages. They defend themselves by saying, "We're just Christian friends. What's a little hug? We're just showing affection."

These open demonstrations of affection are usually shared with everyone in the group. Can such intimacy be justified? Has God ordained that our physical affections belong to everyone we know? Are these young people changing something sacred into what is common? Are they making it cheap by widespread use? Intimate affection should be dear, precious and much too expensive to waste it on just anyone. Indiscriminate (some may say impartial) sharing of physical affection is nothing short of pouring out fornication on every passer-by. "But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was" (Ezek. 16:15).

Why is it so hard to see *fornication for what it is* during your dating years? It is difficult to see because we've been lied to and conditioned out of rational thinking! It is because we are in the middle of the years that our bodies make the temptation strongest. Don't let yourself be fooled! **God says even looking at a woman to lust after her beauty is adultery! Touch, no matter how slight, goes a step beyond that!**

Study the account of Isaac and Rebecca when they were forced to go to Egypt during a famine (Gen. 26:1-11), and then explain how Abimelech *knew* Rebecca was Isaac's wife. Was what he saw simply a *platonic relationship* between a brother and a sister when Isaac was seen *sporting* with Rebecca? Abimelech automatically knew Rebecca was not just Isaac's sister by the demonstration he witnessed. You may think that the word *sporting* means something more sinister than our word today, but take note of the actual Hebrew definition: OT: 6711 HEBREW *tsachaq* (tsaw-khak'); a primitive root; **to laugh outright** (in merriment or scorn); by implication, to *sport: laugh, mock, play, make sport*.

Christians are admonished to treat "...the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, **with all purity**" (1 Tim. 5:2). Would a God fearing young man treat his sister that way? Would he touch her with such familiarity? Why then is petting, or even giving a backrub considered harmless? "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Pro. 4:14-15). "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Pro. 4:23).

Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness and went charging up that hill with Balak, to get as close to the opportunity as he could, all the while proclaiming, "I can only say what God commands me to say."

Was obeying God what he really *wanted*, or did he *desire* an opening to curse the people so he could garner Balak's reward and get rich quickly? Are we unwittingly like Balaam, getting as close to temptation as possible by putting ourselves in the WAY (location) of temptation like he did?

SPECIFICALLY, WHAT IS FLIRTING?

Flirting, no matter what you intend, is an invitation! If you would not do what it appears you are asking for, then your actions are a lie. Look at God's picture of it:

For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; **neither let her take thee with her eyelids.** For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the

precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away (Prov. 6:23-33).

We may not be the one setting out to flirt, but what if we are the target of another's invitations? The Lord spends a remarkable amount of the Scripture warning us very specifically about the grave danger of this situation, which we would do well to heed. Talk about take him with her eyelids! And the descriptions the Lord gives are yet again perfectly *dead on*.

Another revealing quote on flirting, gleaned from among many about the *effectiveness* of fluttering eyelashes or downcast eyes, says, "The eyes are the windows to the soul...When you look at someone, you are saying you are willing to be seen yourself...Once you've made eye contact, longer looks usually work...." (*The Flirting Bible*, Fran Greene, Fair Wins Press, Beverly Massachusetts, 2010, p. 130) One aspect of this process God warns us most about is flattery, and this is not without purpose.

SO LET'S ZERO IN ON FLATTERY!

Many admit that flattery is *THE* key and single most powerful tool of flirting. Do men know what they are doing when they tell a young lady she is beautiful or that her clothes suit her well? Are they using lies to lower her guard? What is her defense in this situation? This effective tool is used in a calculated way by both men and women as a means of control. We can see this stated outright in many writings today. One source says it this way: "The Six Rules of Flirting: (an acronym): F is for Flattery. The fastest way to a person's heart is to find something you truly appreciate about how he or she looks or acts..." (Kuriansky, p 121)

Another writer asserts: "Flirting strategy #1: Say Hi...Flirting strategy #2 Pay a Compliment. From my arsenal of opening line strategies, using compliments is my all-time favorite. It is the most natural way to start a conversation, and it always generates pleasurable results." (Greene, p 160.)

"With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him" (Pro. 7:21). Do we understand the warnings our Lord has given about flattery? "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet" (Pro. 29:5).

It is so easy to see Satan at work all around us, speaking the very words the Lord warns us about. The flatterers are almost *quoting* the best lines of the Devil, but these are revealed plainly in the Scriptures, if we will only pay attention and *be warned* by them!

We must be aware of the wiles of the Devil, and the deceitfulness of sin. We must not be ignorant of his devices. **Dating is not harmless. "Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).**

TRAINING OUR MINDS AND HEARTS

It makes sense that whatever we practice, or exercise our hearts in is what we become! We can't expect to become a great tennis player automatically without a little practice first. What we term *practice* is often called *exercise* in Scripture.

- "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and **exercise** thyself rather unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7).
- "For **bodily exercise profiteth little**: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).
- "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an **heart they have exercised** with covetous practices; cursed children" (2 Pet. 2:14).

We can exercise our hearts in either good or evil! ..This is a decision we have to make daily: to choose to fill our thoughts and time with good or evil influences. We can surround ourselves with passion-stirring books, inappropriate movies, boy-crazy friends, rebellious music, or we can fill our time and thoughts with God's people and His words! "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he..." (Prov. 23:7).

- "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).
- "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their **senses exercised to discern both good and evil**" (Heb. 5:14).
- "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Prov. 4:13-15).
- "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble. My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all

their flesh. **Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.** Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established” (Pro. 4:18-26).

ARE YOU TRAINING TO BE THE KIND OF WIFE A RIGHTEOUS MAN WOULD WANT TO MARRY? Much more could be said on this topic, but these points should provide ample thought for consideration as we examine dating in the light of the Scriptures. Our minds can be refreshed now in turning to the words inspired by God’s Holy Spirit to see the beautiful plan our Creator set out for young people’s lives. **He is our Creator. He knows true love. We should take heed!**



WHAT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN DID OUR CREATOR INTEND?

According to God’s instruction manual, we have two choices with regard to our physical passions: either control our impulses or get married!

- I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. **But if they cannot contain** (1467. egkrateuomai—to exercise self-restraint), **let them marry**: for it is better to marry than to burn. (4448. puroo; to kindle, i.e. (pass.) to be ignited, glow (literally) or (figuratively) to be inflamed (with anger, grief, lust) (1 Cor. 7:8-9).

- Nevertheless, **to avoid fornication**, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband (1 Cor. 7:2).

Nowhere in the Bible can we find a scriptural model for dating as it is practiced in the western world today, and there is a reason for this: An unmarried person is supposed to be **holy**, set apart like the finest china, reserved for a particular service. "There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. *The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, **that she may be holy both in body and in spirit***: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband" (1 Cor. 7:34). The practice of dating takes the fine china (body and spirit of an unmarried person) and uses it indiscriminately to *feed the dog...or lots of dogs!*

If a person is not married, they do not have the right of **touch**. ONLY in the institution of marriage is this right granted (and even required as something that is *due* our partner, or is rightfully owed, as **belonging** to them.)

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to **touch** a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife **due** benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 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. 5 **Defraud** ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (1 Cor. 7:1-5).

The wording in this passage and others indicates **possession** and **rights**. The married woman *belongs* to her husband and vice versa. *Outside of marriage, touch is theft and defrauding*. We can see this clearly if a man's wife is seen even holding hands with another man. Why is it so difficult to see when two young unmarried people are doing the same thing? It is because our society has painted this as acceptable, even desirable? God sees it very differently. Again and again in Scripture, illicit relationships are compared with thievery and cheating, and are shown to be **defiling**.

- Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. **But whoso committeth adultery with a woman** lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away (Pro. 6:30-33).

- For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in **sanctification** and **honour**; 5 Not in the lust of **concupiscence**, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that **despiseth**, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit” (1 Thess. 4:3-8).

Note the definitions of key words from this passage:

- Vessel: 4632. skeuos; a vessel, implement, equipment or apparatus
- Sanctification: 38. hagio; prop. Purification
- Honor: 5092. Time; a value, i.e. money paid, or (concr. and collect.) valuables; by anal. esteem (espec. of the highest degree),
- Concupiscence: 1939. epithumia,; a longing (espec. for what is forbidden)
- Despiseth: 114. atheteo; to set aside, i.e. (by impl.) to disesteem, neutralize or violate

We can see throughout these few passages that touch outside of marriage is not simply stealing from a husband or wife what is rightfully theirs; but it also robs another of their purity. Passion within the God-ordained institution of marriage is honorable and clean; outside of marriage it utterly defiles a person, making them no better than a harlot: *Marriage is honourable* in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

By God’s decree, it is expected that a man will seek to be married only when he is prepared to provide for a family. Recall (Gen. 29:13-21) Jacob’s arranging to work for seven years for the privilege of marrying Rachael, and recall in Genesis 24:29-38 how Abraham’s servant carefully explains to Rebekah’s family the financial situation of Isaac and thus his ability to care for her. Consider also 1 Timothy 5:8: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

Searching for a mate is not something to be done for recreation.

It is serious business, and should be handled prayerfully, with utmost care and careful consideration. Parents, according to Biblical pattern, were very often involved as overseers: recall the process for Isaac (Gen. 24), Jacob (Gen. 29: 17-28), David (1 Sam. 18:17-27) and Samson (Judges 14:1-18). God has given us the precious understanding that finding a *prudent* mate, ultimately, can be left up to His provision. “House and riches are the inheritance of

fathers: and **a prudent wife is from the LORD**" (Pro. 19:14). Must I trust in my own heart and understanding in searching for a mate, or would I be better served to prayerfully entrust my God with this undertaking, and wait patiently on Him (Pro. 3:5-7)?

QUESTIONS:

1. Approximately what century was the modern dating model invented? Must we assume that people were not able to get married before that time?
2. The modern dating model allows romantic expression (with or without) _____ commitment.
3. Explain the original purpose for which the modern dating model was invented.
4. In the Scriptures, what does God say about dating?
5. Explain what attitude the making and breaking of multiple dating relationships promotes.
6. Give two examples of how a mate was chosen either from the Old Testament or the New.
7. Compare: Luke 1:27; Matthew 1:25; Matthew 1:20 noting the facts about the marriage of Joseph and Mary. Explain how anyone today has a right to divorce a mate or have a marriage annulled because the *marriage was not consummated*. See also Matthew 19:9.
8. What constitutes marriage (Matt. 19:5; Mal. 2:14)?
9. Does becoming *one flesh* with a harlot mean that the man and woman are married? Why not?

10. If a person is not married, they do not have the right of _____. ONLY in the institution of marriage is this right granted (and even required as something that is *due* our partner, or is rightfully owed, as _____ to them.)
11. When a man was prepared to provide for a family, only then did he seek a _____.
12. Explain the problem in Proverbs 7:21-27.
13. Why is it so hard to see *fornication for what it is* during your dating years?
14. As two people relate intimately, _____ interferes with clear thinking.
15. It is well documented that a heightened state of excitement causes the body to release certain hormones and chemicals. Give examples of these chemical reactions in the brain.
16. How will flirting likely cause you to fall to temptation (Pro. 6:23-33)?
17. Give more than one reason why flattery is so dangerous.
18. Would you rather have a mate who had never been with anyone else or one that could brag about all the women he had known and loved?
19. What kind of wife would a righteous man rather have, one who had *known* many men or only him?
20. Who gives the prudent wives to deserving men?

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Lesson 5 Beth Johnson

Fortunately for the church, many women have already been taught to support their husbands. If we are Christians, we know we are to be help-meets to our husbands no matter what profession they have. When it comes to being a preacher's wife, what other things are expected of us? Will preacher's wives be held to higher standards than other Christians? Will we hold ourselves to higher standards? What about our children? We might consider the "2-for-1 package deal" that congregations sometimes assume they get when they hire a man to preach. Several areas could be addressed. We might label these as "Things to consider before deciding to marry a preacher."

- Living in a "glass house"
- Living in the shadow of the preacher
- Dealing with criticism
- Making time for family
- Money matters
- Making time for personal spiritual growth and encouragement

Exactly what is the "job" of the preacher's wife? How will she handle it if her husband is interviewing for a new position and the congregational leaders make it clear that they expect the preacher's wife to hold a secular job? They may make it clear that she must provide part of the family support, as they are unable (or unwilling) to pay him enough to support the family. Neither are they willing to allow him to have a second job. Have you studied enough scripture to know how to answer such demands? Are you committed to being able to live frugally? What sacrifices are you willing to make?

One Christian young lady let it be known that her life's goal was to marry a preacher. What did she think she was getting? What was her real goal? Was her ambition rational? Many a young girl has said she would like to marry someone who will be her spiritual leader, and preachers are usually perceived as such. She probably imagines she will not have the normal troubles and temptations in life that other ladies her age have. She imagines she will be protected from temptation and sin, but this concept of a preacher's life is unrealistic. Just because a husband is a strong spiritual leader does not mean there will be no temptations for him or his wife. If anything, Satan will seek them out (1 Pet 5:8).

Perhaps the young lady is unsure of her own faith, or she may have failed a few of life's tests and know she needs a "guardian angel" to watch over her. Whatever the underlying reasons, she needs to do some deep soul-

searching before she takes the big step; otherwise, when the pressures of the life she has chosen come to her marriage, she may cause the family structure to crumble. Not only will her family and friends be affected, but the whole church will suffer.

First of all, the reason for marrying a preacher should not be to shore up a woman's own weaknesses. She should think about what she herself can bring into the marriage. Can she truly be a help meet for him and support him in his work? Can she be depended upon to take up slack where he may be weak? Can she endure when other ladies either approach her husband romantically or the whole group rejects him as their teacher? Both kinds of people will be in every congregation. How will she respond?

Other times such a young lady may have thought that being married to the preacher would bring her respect and honor. Little does she know how few preachers are actually honored for their work, and even fewer wives are remembered at all. In fact, if a preacher is teaching truth and standing for biblical principles, he may even be rejected by congregation after congregation. Purportedly, the average preacher in the USA moves every two years. When any congregation rejects the preacher it most definitely rejects the wife as well. Can the wife endure such treatment? Will she be willing to suffer for the sake of the Gospel of Christ (2 Tim 3:12-13)? What about uprooting the children every time the husband must search for another job?

The life of the apostle Paul is a great example of what Christians and outsiders can do to a preacher. "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings" (2 Cor. 6:4-5). Paul must have understood Christ's statement in Matthew 19:12. "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: **and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.** He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matt. 19:12). As the wife of a preacher, what hardships might a woman have to endure—the demanding schedule or even unfeeling treatment of those opposed to the gospel? **Why do you suppose Paul chose not to marry** and carry a wife with him everywhere he went even though he has a right to?

On another occasion Paul says, "By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet

possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:6-10). Can every Christian young lady endure such extremes? Is she willing to admit these situations may well come to her?

If the young lady's goal is noble, if her repentance is genuine, if her desire to live godly is true, then she must acknowledge that having the extra burden of living in a glass house could cause her to falter in her resolve. Is she prepared for the extra burdens that living in the limelight will bring? "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (1 Tim. 3:12). If that is true of every Christian, then how much more relevant is it to the preacher and his wife!

YOU ARE WHAT YOU DO

If you read a list of professions from earlier times, it reads like a roster of surnames. That's because people were strongly identified by what they did for a living (as opposed to recently, when we pay attention to what's on their iPod). John Smith was a person named John who worked as a blacksmith; Bill Sawyer was a lumberjack, and so on. In India, in the Parsee community, one will find people with surnames such as Contractor, Doctor, Engineer, etc. But watch and see: when someone asks, "Who is he?" or "Who is she?" Without hesitation, people will describe what they **do** and with whom they are associated. "Oh, he is a salesman over at the Ford dealership," or, "She is the preacher's wife."

So who are you? How would you be identified today if someone in the crowd of people asked a friend who you were? **How would the crowd expect you to behave?** Would they have a right to expect more of you than someone whose profession identifies them as something else? Are you the wife of the local doctor or school principal? Are you a Bible class teacher? Are you a mother? Are you the sister to any one of these?

The world expects certain behavior of certain people. Under the Old Testament it was no different. The priests were spiritual leaders of the nation of Israel and were not to marry a widow, a divorced woman, a profane woman, or a harlot (Lev. 21:12-15). There was a higher standard expected of spiritual leaders and their wives. Obviously, leading by example is one of the ways spiritual leaders do their work. The wives are naturally an extension of their husbands, so they too are expected to be above reproach.

Even the children of priests were held to a higher standard. If the daughter of a priest were to play the harlot, she was to be burnt with fire (Lev. 21:9). That was a much stronger punishment than for other men's daughters who may have done the same thing. More was expected of them because they had been entrusted with more (Luke 12:48).

How was Jesus identified when people asked who he was? "And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the

multitude said, **This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee**" (Matt. 21:10-11). There are actually two identities associated with Jesus. The ones who wanted to defame him made reference to the fact that he came from Nazareth—a despised place (John 1:46). Yet the ones who were his disciples remembered that he spoke for God (John 7:16). Jesus did not "live down" to the scoffers' expectations of him, nor did he live in such a way to justify their disbelief of his teaching and his miracles.

Whether or not we consciously judge, almost **all men expect everyone else to be "perfect,"** whether in driving, keeping one's place in line, performing an operation, directing traffic, rearing children, etc. Naturally, expectations for spiritual leaders and their wives are no different.

Part of man's judgment is based in the amount of power or money with which they have been entrusted. "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). The ten talent man was expected to produce more than the five talent man. Our spiritual leaders (preachers, elders, deacons, Bible class teachers) are in a position of speaking for the Lord (Matt. 23:1-3) and as such are expected to obey the commands they impart to those who have not yet obeyed. "With what judgment we judge, we will be judged..." whether by God or men. (Matt. 7:1-3).

Even though we may judge others harshly, we ourselves expect to receive lenient judgment (Rom. 2:1-2). Nevertheless, the way we judge is the way we will be judged whether by God or man. The Jew assumed a position of authority for God (Rom. 2:17-20). Nevertheless, the world condemned him for his hypocrisy (Rom. 2:21-24).

When someone describes what you "do," will they be able to say, she is a preacher's wife, a Bible class teacher or an elder's wife—**a leader of the people who is above reproach?** When someone asks where you attend church, will they say you are a member of the Lord's body and a faithful Christian? We all should live in such a way that Christ is not ashamed to call us his own.

Keep in mind that adjusting to the role of marriage itself is going to be a huge task, and adjustment to being a preacher's wife will be even more difficult. You will not only have your husband to please, but you will have a whole congregation to satisfy at the same time. Preparation is paramount.

WHEN AND HOW SHOULD YOUNG LADIES BEGIN TO PREPARE FOR ANY MARRIAGE?

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what

communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Some argue that 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 does not mention marriage, and they are right. **That passage is talking about every aspect of our lives. What more important yoke could there be in life than marriage?** Certainly this very important command from our Heavenly Father does not exclude marriage.

One of the most important decisions a person will ever make is who they marry. Christians should always and only marry faithful Christians—not just someone who calls himself a member. Both parents and children must do their part to ensure that this is what happens. We know that numbers do not prove God’s truth; however, here are some sobering statistics, based on a study of two churches of Christ in America.

- The Church of Christ, B Street, Miami, Oklahoma (1957-1977).
 - In these years, only 45% of the marriages (64 out of 143) were Christian to Christian.
 - Is it any wonder why the church has been growing so weak during these years?
 - When Christians married non-Christians, 79% of Christians left the faith, and 32% divorced.
 - When Christians married Christians, 92% remained faithful, and only 3% divorced.
- Bridges Street Church of Christ, Wynne, Arkansas (1962-1981).
 - In these years, only 27% of the marriages (28 out of 104) were between Christians.
 - When Christians married non-Christians, 80% of Christians left the faith, and 30% divorced.
 - When Christians married Christians, 86% remained faithful, and 14% divorced.
- Overall, 63% of marriages in the two congregations were Christian to non-Christian; of these, 76% of Christians became unfaithful, and 31%

divorced. In Christian-to-Christian marriages, 90% remained faithful, and only 6.5% divorced.

Statistics aren't the *reason* we should do anything, but these certainly demonstrate God's wisdom in this matter. Can we, should we teach very young girls and boys that they need to choose Christian mates when they grow up? It may be too late to try to teach that concept after they are in their teen years and already interested in someone.

THINGS ABOUT MARRIAGE WE MUST CONSIDER

As a woman becomes a wife, she also becomes a keeper at home (Titus 2:5). She is to guide the house (1 Tim. 5:14). The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 has many wonderful qualities which could be studied and discussed. There are good and bad choices, which definitely affect how well this role can be fulfilled.

Fortunately for many of us, being a good wife is our life's goal. By saying we seek to attain that status, **we acknowledge that we are not expert** (1 Cor. 8:2). Included in this category are those who are preparing to become a wife and, maybe, those who are already wives.

- "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).
- "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Tim. 5:14).

What will make your dreams and goals come true? What about that white dress? **Decisions you make from the time you are very young will impact the rest of your life as a wife** (Gal. 6:7-8). One thing is necessary for every marriage and that is **preparation**—not just buying or making the perfect white dress. Traditionally, the white dress is symbolic of purity, and we must not make a mockery of it if we have not lived a pure life.

- "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, **prepared** as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2).
- "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be **arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints**" (Rev. 19:7-8).

AS WIVES, WE ARE COMMANDED TO ADORN OUR HEARTS.

- “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. **Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.** For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement” (1 Pet. 3:1-6).
- “Thou blind Pharisee, **cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter,** that the outside of them may be clean also” (Matt. 23:26).

THE NEED FOR PREPARATION

Is being a good wife automatic? If so, the Lord wouldn't have given the direction He does.

“That they may **teach the young women** to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5).

If you think you *already* know enough and have the qualities you need to be a good wife, *beware!*

- “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Prov. 28:26).
- “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes:” (Prov. 3:5-7).

WHAT ABOUT ON-THE-JOB TRAINING?

- So you say you're pretty busy now, and besides, you've watched your mom for years, and it's not that big of a deal. You'll just learn anything you don't already know as you go along.
- Well, you *could* do that! So could a brain surgeon learn on the job, but he might make a few critical mistakes here and there! That obviously is not optimal.

- **LIFE IS REAL-TIME.** *Moments* sometimes make the difference! Being a wife is a **full time job**. It isn't optimal to just start and plan to learn how along the way, because there just is not TIME to learn all you need to know when you are in the middle of it! The more you learn now, the fewer mistakes you will make, and the better "brain surgeon" you will be! **We need to prepare.**

PREPARATION WILL GET YOU A BETTER "CAREER."

IF you prepare yourself now, does it seem reasonable to assume that the Lord might TRUST you with *an even better* husband and children? Consider Bible examples, of women like Mary and Ruth who made themselves ready for a good marriage. "House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD" (Prov. 19:14).

It's a lot easier to **prepare** than to try to **undo** and **fix** later! This is no joke! Be wise and circumspect, remembering the ten virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish.

PREPARATION TIME IS FINITE; YOU'RE TICKING OFF YOUR HOURS!

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psa. 90:12). IF you honestly and truly want to be a good wife, what are you **doing about it right now?**

HOW TO PREPARE

First and most basic would be to decide whether we would sow to the flesh or to the spirit. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8). Will we live our lives unto ourselves or according to God's purpose? The basis of your life will determine the basis of your marriage and *its success or failure*. How does God tell us to prepare? What should be the aim of an unmarried girl?

- "There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband" (1 Cor. 7:34).
- "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7). We see from this passage that the opposite of uncleanness

(or impurity) is holiness.

- “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

FROM WHAT (PARTICULARLY) DO WE NEED TO CLEANSE OURSELVES?

To be a “gold” vessel, we must flee youthful lusts. “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also *youthful lusts*: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:19-22).

Greek #1939. *epithumia*, ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah; from G1937; a longing (especially for what is forbidden): concupiscence, desire, lust (after). #1937. *epithumeo*, ep-ee-thoo-meh'-o; from G1909 and G2372; to set the heart upon, i.e. long for (rightfully or otherwise): covet, desire, would fain, lust (after).

WHAT SPIRITUAL QUALITIES DO WE NEED TO LEARN BEFORE WE CAN BECOME A GOOD WIFE?

SUBMISSION, OBEDIENCE

- Greek 5293. To subordinate; reflex. to obey: be under obedience (obedient), put under
- “Wives, **submit** yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is **subject** unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Eph. 5:22-24).
- “Wives, **submit** yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord” (Col. 3:18).

If we can't learn to obey the parents God gave us as our authorities, how do we expect to automatically *obey* a husband?

REVERENCE

- Greek 5399. To frighten, i.e. (pass.) to be alarmed; by and To be in awe of, i.e. revere: be (+ sore) afraid, fear (exceedingly), reverence
- “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; **and the wife see that she reverence her husband**” (Eph. 5:33).
- Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and **we gave them reverence**: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live” (Heb. 12:9)?

Once again, if we don't reverence our parents, how can we expect to obey the command to *reverence* our husband or our Heavenly Father?

SERVITUDE

- “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an **help** meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). (Hebrew 5828; **aid**—help.)
- “And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife” (1 Sam. 25:39-42).
- “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household...?” (Matt. 24:45).
- “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt. 23:11).

CONSIDERATION

We need to remember that we are indebted to the husband for his protection and care of us. We do not want to be like Israel was with God.

- “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider” (Isa. 1:3).

Who is more worthy of our encouragement and consideration than our own husbands? “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Heb. 10:24).

BEING AN HONOR, NOT A SHAME

- 4586. venerable, i.e. honorable
- “Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come” (Pro. 31:25).
- “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones” (Pro. 12:4).
- “Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land” (Pro. 31:23).
- Far be it that we should envy our neighbor and especially our spouse of his position. “A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones” (Pro. 14:30).
- “Even so must their wives be **grave**, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things” (1 Tim. 3:11).

If we are not diligent and careful to be an honor to our parents, will we understand how to honor our husbands? Consider what we do every day that may or may not bring honor to our parents or our husbands.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

- “Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, **faithful** in all things” (1 Tim 3:11).
- “The heart of her husband doth safely **trust** in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil” (Prov. 31:11).
- “She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life” (Prov. 31:12).

THERE ARE MANY THINGS EVERY WIFE SHOULD BE. ARE YOU LEARNING TO BE A GOOD WIFE NOW?

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the command for those seeking to be married (2 Cor. 6:14-18)?
2. Was this command only written for those getting married?
3. What sad story might be told of those who marry outside the body of Christ?
4. What example does the Lord give for the wife to follow (Eph. 5:22-24)?
5. Actually, in whose position is the husband when the wife is commanded to obey him (Eph. 5:24)?
6. Why then is the woman not allowed to teach her head (1 Tim. 2:11-12)?
7. What example does the Lord give to describe the reverence we should have toward God (Heb. 12:9)?
8. What was the purpose that God had in mind for creating woman (Gen. 2:18)?
9. Can we know if Abigail actually washed the feet of David's servants after she became his wife (1 Sam. 25:39-42)?
10. How does this compare with the "widow indeed" (1 Tim. 5:5, 10)?
11. Does God's calling for the woman to be humble mean that she will be last (worth less) in eternity (Matt. 23:11)?
12. What does the Lord expect the mind of the wife be toward her husband (1 Cor. 7:34)?
13. Will a woman bring shame to her husband or a crown of glory to him (Pro. 12:4)?
14. Should the wife be envious of her husband's position (Pro. 14:30)?
15. Are the qualities required of an elder's wife qualities everyone should have (1 Tim. 3:11)?
16. Will a worthy wife ever intentionally do evil to her husband (Pro. 30:12)?

17. What does God think of a contentious woman (Pro. 21:9)?
18. What is a contentious wife like (Pro. 19:13)?
19. To be honest, must we always say everything that comes into our minds (Pro. 29:11)?
20. What is on the tongue of the worthy woman (Pro. 31:26)?
21. What is the woman's responsibility (1 Tim. 5:14)?
22. What did it mean that Daniel chastened himself before the Lord (Dan. 10:12)?
23. Whose word does the worthy woman seek in order to grow in wisdom (1 Cor. 2:13)?
24. What does the Lord think of a person who finds wisdom and gets understanding (Pro. 3:13)?
25. What is a major characteristic of God's children (Matt. 5:9)?
26. How does God plan for women to learn to love their husbands (Titus 2:4)?
27. Does God expect all women to know how to love their husbands without being taught (Titus 2:4)?
28. Who is the one who is responsible for making us what we are (1 Cor. 4:7)?
29. Where should our confidence be to make it possible for us to become what we should (1 John 5:14-15)?
30. Is it worth it to marry unscripturally and lose our souls in eternity (Matt. 16:26)?

A HELP MEET FOR HIM

Lesson 6
Beth Johnson

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; **I will make him an help meet for him.** 19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but **for Adam there was not found an help meet for him** ([Gen. 2:18-20](#)).

The original Hebrew term *help meet* is defined in Strong's Concordance as **aid, helper, companion, or mate** and was used by God to describe Eve before she was created as Adam's spouse ([Gen. 2:18](#)). Eve's position (and ours) has not changed since creation. If we can get that fact firmly fixed in our minds, our job as helper, companion or mate will be much easier. The reason for our existence is to fulfill that role while we are on this earth.

HOW CAN YOU BE A HELP MEET TO YOUR HUSBAND?

Note especially the idea of the virtuous woman and how she was a particularly good example as a help meet for her husband.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. 11 **The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.** 12 **She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.** 13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. 14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. 15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. 16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. 17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. 18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. 19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. 20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. 22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. 23 **Her husband is known in the gates,**

when he sitteth among the elders of the land. 24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. 25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. 26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. **28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.** 29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. 30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates (Prov. 31:10-31).

Should we not aspire to love our husbands the same way she did and be of value to them as well as to our families and to God? Every young girl should learn Proverbs 31:10-31 by heart and strive to be like that virtuous woman.

Why do young women have to be taught to love their husbands? We are to "... teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, **that the word of God be not blasphemed**" (Tit. 2:4-5).

God's kind of love, spiritual love, is based on higher standard than that of the world. As you study each quality, take note and understand that **God's kind of love is not an emotion but a way of life**. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Most people intuitively understand one reason for marriage even if they have not specifically studied the topic. "Nevertheless, **to avoid fornication**, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Cor. 7:2). **"Two are better than one;** because they have a **good reward for their labour**. For **if they fall**, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, **then they have heat**: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, **two shall withstand him**; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:9-12).

So who should get married, and what is the difference between those married and those who are not? "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (1 Cor. 7:9). "For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that" (1 Cor. 7:7). "But as God hath

distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches" (1 Cor. 7:17). "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you" (1 Cor. 7:28).

What is the duty of each companion toward the other and toward God? "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 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. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (1 Cor. 7:3-5).

There is a fine balance between being concerned about how to please the mate and yet not loving the world or the things of the world. "But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. 34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband" (1 Cor. 7:32-34). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

Every wife has fundamental duties required of her as a help meet for her husband. In every generation the help meet should:

- a. Fulfill the duty of marriage
- b. Be concerned with pleasing the husband according to God's commands
- c. Take care of food and clothing
- d. Guard and keep the home
- e. Train the children
- f. Literally stand "in front" or opposite him in his work

Let us all ponder the paths our marriages are taking. What is the ultimate purpose of the husband and wife relationship in the eternal plan of God (above and beyond the physical reason)? Why bother making male and female and husband and wife relationship? "**All things** work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:28-29). The relationship between husband and wife, as with everything else

in our lives, is to help us to be conformed to Christ's image to become faithful and wise stewards and to enable us to serve and reign with him eternally.

Do my husband and I have goals for ourselves and for our marriage? How can I reap *eternal* treasure in my marriage? Can I sow to eternal things (to the spirit)? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:7-9).

What are our spiritual, eternal goals? One goal should be that both of us might not only be saved, but that each of us could be vessels of gold (2 Tim. 2:20-21). Another goal could be that through our marriage we could each have great treasure laid up in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20). As his help meet, I might have the goal of saving my husband's soul if he has not yet become a Christian (1 Pet. 3:1-2). How do I go about sowing to the spirit in my marriage when God himself says the very nature of marriage changes my focus (1 Cor. 7:32-34)?

Our goal may be reached by doing even the smallest things for the right motive. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23-24). I can have a higher standard by following God's commands in my marriage; obeying my husband as Christ; fulfilling my God-given duties; learning to love him and by sowing "the fruit of the spirit": love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, etc. (Gal. 5:22).

What things tend to make us grow weary in our marriages? Sometimes negative thoughts and attitudes are caused by focusing on the little things and not the big picture. How can these things be overcome by hope? "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Marriage isn't always easy. Husbands aren't flawless, and neither are we! I must not "fix" my husband, but I can certainly work on myself. No matter what the earthly "result" of my marriage might be, I can have great hope for reaping eternal good, if I follow God's commands for this roll. My relationship to my husband can give me experience to be: faithful; obedient; temperate; selfless in the service of the Master. **Note particularly what tends to make us weary in our marriages—especially when husband/wife relationships are not easy?**

- **Husband not loving wife as his own body** "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Eph. 5:28-29).

- **Husband not giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel...**“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Pet. 3:7).
- **Husband accusing falsely** “Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ” (1 Pet. 3:16).
- **Husband not forgiving mistakes** “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses” (Matt. 18:35).
- **Husband carrying a grudge** “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26).
- **Husband taking vengeance or getting even** “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:19-21).
- **Husband using threats, ridicule or hatred to control** “Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:3).
- **Husband being an untoward (wicked) master** “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph. 6:9).

ARE WE SERVING OUR MATES AS WE SERVE CHRIST?

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor. 7:23). So what is this all about—not serving men?

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; **With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:** Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph. 6:5-8).

ARE WE TRULY WORKING FOR THE LORD?

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: **whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.** For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:6-9).

Notice in the book of Malachi who was weary with their duties to the Lord. Have we, like the Israelites, been *unjustly* weary in our marriage relationships?

"Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. 12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. 13 **Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.** 14 But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen (Mal. 1:10-14).

What was God's response to the unjust weariness displayed by these people? "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. 14 **But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen** (Mal. 1:13-14).

OTHER REASONS FOR WEARINESS

Sometimes we have tribulation from those outside and inside the family, or we may have normal physical issues that are a deterrent to peace.

- “Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory” (Eph. 3:13).
- “But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing” (2 Thess. 3:13).
- “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Heb. 12:3).
- “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
- “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).
- “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:7-10).

If weariness in doing well were not a common temptation, there would have been no need for so many scriptures addressing that very issue. “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Rom. 2:7). **Do we have hope of reaping in due season?** “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:7).

WE MUST NOT FAINT

- Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon

the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint (Isa. 40:28-31).

- "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13).
- And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:1-8).
- "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory" **14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,** 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen (Eph. 3:13-21).
- But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6).
- For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14).
- For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:35-39).

- Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds (Heb. 12:2-3).

WHAT ABOUT THE IMMEDIATE REWARD FOR HUSBANDS WHO ARE NOT RIGHTEOUS?

- “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Eccl. 8:11).
- Are we able to accept these facts of life and move on to do our duty before the Lord in spite of trouble? Will every husband do his duty before God, or will there be a few like Nabal who are fools? **Remember to keep the [focus on our duty as help meet](#).**

DO WE UNDERSTAND GOD’S VIEW OF VOWS AND CONTRACTS? JUST HOW SERIOUS ARE THEY?

The commitment God expects of us in our marriages is generally lacking today. Some couples seem not to be respecting their vows before God. One woman said she had no problem using “love, honor and obey” in her marriage ceremony, because her intended could take a joke as well as anyone. It was evident she had no intention of loving, honoring or obeying if such did not suit her.

Another woman said she deliberately read novels in order to get *spiked* for times when her husband approached her romantically. Can there be any difference in a man looking at a woman to lust after her and a woman reading a novel to cause herself to lust? Women would appreciate their husbands more if they would get their noses out of the fake *Romeo* of the trash novels and see their men the way God tells them to! Women do not realize how much of themselves they hold back because their husbands do not make them feel the way the books make them think they should feel. Reading and imagining such experiences is disastrous to a marriage! Do we need to be reminded that it is not only what we do when we walk out the front door, but what we do inside the confines of our home that matters to God? Faithfulness to our vows is not limited to the physical body but should be part of the mind and heart as well.

EXAMPLES OF FAITHFUL SOULS WHO VOWED

- Men made vows when they were in trouble (Judges 11:29-30).
- David made vows when he was in trouble (Psa. 66:13-14).
- David had vows to perform daily (Psa. 61:8).

SOME OLD TESTAMENT LAWS REGARDING VOWS

"And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded. 2 If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth. 3 If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; 4 And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. 5 But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. 6 And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; 7 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. 8 But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the Lord shall forgive her. 9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her. 10 And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; 11 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. 12 But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the Lord shall forgive her. 13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. 14 But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them. 15 But if he shall any

ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity. 16 These are the statutes, which the Lord commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house (Num. 30:1-16).

The Jews were commanded not to make inquiry after they made a vow. "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry" (Prov. 20:25).

A deformed animal was accepted as freewill offering, but not a vow. "Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted" (Lev. 22:23).

WHAT WAS GOD'S RESPONSE TO THOSE WHO DID NOT KEEP VOWS OR WHO SPOKE EMPTY WORDS?

- "For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. 4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. 6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God" (Eccl. 5:3-7).
- "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37).

VOWS AND COVENANTS BEFORE GOD ARE THE BASIS OF STABILITY IN MARRIAGE. "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant" (Mal. 2:14).

We see God's protection of marriage in the New Testament. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9).

What is the warning if we allow anything to keep us from being faithful to each other? "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Matt. 19:6).

GOD REJECTED ISRAEL BECAUSE OF BROKEN VOWS

And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. 14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16 For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously (Mal. 2:13-16).

WILL WE BE HEIRS TOGETHER OF ETERNAL BLESSINGS?

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Pet. 3:7). If we follow these principles, we will inherit God’s favor. **Remember the church will be married to Christ in eternity. What better way to train us for that position than to give us a marriage here on earth through which we learn!**

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God (Rev. 19:7-9).

PRESENT DAY MARRIAGE IS A TESTING GROUND TO DISCERN OUR FAITHFULNESS

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will

commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? (Luke 16:10-12).

For our own encouragement, let us look at a few examples of women in the scriptures who were faithful helpmeets—some in good circumstances and some who endured adversity.

RUTH'S NAME MEANS FEMALE COMPANION OR FRIEND. She was a Moabitess descended from Lot (Gen. 19:36-37; Neh. 13:1-3), married to the son of Naomi. After her husband died, she was free to go back to her family and to her religion. We know she chose to serve the God of Heaven and live as a servant to Naomi the rest of her life. Having proved her faithfulness in serving her first husband and then her faithfulness in serving Naomi, she was given another duty to serve Boaz and become part of the lineage of Christ.

Most everyone who studies Old Testament history knows the account of **Abigail, wife of Nabal in 1 Samuel 25**. Likely, because of his foolishness, she had to cover for him day after day to keep someone from killing him. Abigail was a faithful help meet even in adversity! Both wise and prudent, she continually served a froward husband because she understood that she was serving the living God by serving him.

PRISCILLA WAS A GODLY HELP MEET FOR AQUILA. In Acts 18:18 Paul, along with Priscilla and Aquila, went to Syria for preaching. In Acts 18:22 we see that Priscilla and Aquila had obeyed the Roman law to exit Rome when all the Jews were thrust out, but together they found a way to serve God's people in another place. In Acts 18:26 we see that Priscilla and Aquila were kind enough to take Apollos aside in the privacy of their own home to teach him the way of God more perfectly. Later in Romans 16:3-4 we read of Priscilla and Aquila again when Paul sends greetings and mentions how *they* have laid down their necks for his life! Not only Paul but also all the churches in Galatia are thankful for the work they have done. Finally, we read in 1 Corinthians 16:19 that Priscilla and Aquila are with Paul again, serving in Asia and the church meets in their home. The unity between Priscilla and Aquila is the focus here. With Priscilla being help meet to Aquila as she should be, it is easy to see that they served the Lord together wherever they were.

MARY—the mother of Jesus was willing to do whatever task she was given by the Lord. Mary's heart is seen clearly in her response to the angel's directions in Luke 1:36-38. "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing shall be impossible. 38 And Mary said, **Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.** And the angel departed from her" (Luke 1:36-38). We should have no doubt that she served Joseph as she served the Lord.

What a blessing Christian men and women have under the law of Christ! Wives are treasured and honored as the one-and-only wife, which should make our responsibility and our dedication to our husbands even greater (Matt. 19:3-9; Gen. 2:21-24). We should not expect the finest clothing or jewels (1 Tim. 6:8), but be ever grateful that the Lord has given us first place in our husband's hearts and in our marriage relationships. Then we have that wonderful hope of a place in eternity as the bride of Christ. What a beautiful concept that becomes, as we consider our place in eternity.

The following poem is a reflection of the love and joy husbands and wives have known in this life—love for each other and the joy of serving the Lord together. It is also about those who have lost that companion.

ONE OF US TWO

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

The day will dawn when one of us shall hearken
In vain to hear a voice that has grown dumb;
And morns will fade, noons pale, and shadows darken
While sad eyes watch for feet that never come.

One of us two must sometime face existence
Alone with memories that but sharpen the pain,
And these sweet days shall shine back in the distance
Like dreams of summer drunk in nights of rain.

One of us two, with tortured heart half-broken
Shall read long treasured letters through salt tears,
Shall kiss with anguished lips, each cherished token
That speaks of these love crowned, delicious years.

One of us two shall find all light, all beauty
All joy on earth, a tale forever done;
Shall know henceforth that life means only duty.
O God! O God! Have pity on this one.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of the Hebrew term, *help meet*?
2. When a young man is chosen by a sports team to be the manager, what would be his duties? What if he decides he wants to play in the game because he has skill? This is a two-part question requiring full sentences.
3. If a young girl is seeking freedom from the restrictions in her home, should she seek to be married? Explain why or why not?
4. Sometimes women are married to men who are not as intelligent and they are tempted to take over the leadership of the marriage. What scriptures might they use to protect themselves from this temptation? Keep in mind that Jesus answered the Devil's temptations with a scripture every time.
5. In our public school systems today, books, counselors and teachers are constantly pumping the little girls to "decide on a career" or they are pushing them to make "choices for their lives." How is that possible if the little girl wants to marry and have a family?
6. List the ways the Virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 was a help meet to her husband?
7. In what ways was Abigail a help meet to Nabal?
8. What are some situations that might cause us to become weary as help meets to our husbands?
9. Are we always justifiably weary with our husbands? How do you know?
10. Describe what was happening in the service of the temple that caused the Lord to curse those people (Mal. 1:10-14).
11. List at least ten (10) scriptures that should give us hope even if we are in a bad situation?
12. What are some spiritual/eternal goals we should have in our marriages?
13. How can my husband and I reap eternal treasure in our marriage?
14. What is the basis for security or stability in a marriage?
15. **RESEARCH QUESTION:** Using *Bible Women*, lessons for ladies at: (<http://chennaitts.org/pdf/BibleWomenLes01-31.pdf>), choose any three of the wives described in that series that we have not already talked about to show how each was (or was not) a help meet to her husband.

WHAT IS MY ROLE?

Lesson 7



BEING A SERVANT IN THE CHURCH

God has set different ones in the church.

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:27-31).

We know that during the first century different members had different gifts or different manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Each person had a special place and yet the body worked together in unison. So we in our generation have different places in the church. Essentially everyone has some place, some role or some part in the body of Christ. Even the more feeble, uncomely, and less honourable are necessary and worthy of much honor.

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I

am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another (1 Cor. 12:14-25).

There are many members, many offices and differing gifts.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:4-8).

A woman may aspire to be the wife of a preacher, a deacon or an elder, but she has to meet certain qualifications laid down for her by God. Not only does the elder or deacon himself have to be qualified for that work, but his whole family must meet certain criteria, and that puts a heavy responsibility on the wife to work together with her husband to see that such is possible.

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how

shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3:2-7).

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. **Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.** Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

Women can be a servant of the church like Phebe was at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1). Or they can be full of good works, like the widow. "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work" (1 Tim. 5:10).

In the New Testament women taught other women, children, and those who had not been baptized into the body of Christ (Acts 18:24-26). Women today can have a part in helping to save souls everywhere. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; **Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth**" (1 Tim 2:1-4). Every day there will be decisions to make that could cause a woman to be a good, or not-so-good, servant in the church.

If you are the wife of an elder or preacher, you will be the example for other women in the church. Every woman (young or old) should serve as an example; however, in this special role you will be the focus for many in the church who are new to the faith or immature. **Your husband will have respect or shame, depending on how you conduct yourself as his helpmeet** (Pro. 31:23).

SO WHY CAN A WOMAN NOT TEACH IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SAINTS?

NOTICE HOW THE ASSEMBLY WAS TO BE CONDUCTED.

"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. 34 **Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak;** but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. 36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. **38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.** 39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. **40 Let all things be done decently and in order** (1 Cor. 14:26-40).

WHAT WERE SOME NEW TESTAMENT ASSEMBLY ACTIVITIES?

The New Testament assemblies are commanded (Heb. 10:25) and certain activities are commanded in these assemblies.

- Lord's Supper: Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 11:20, 33
- Instruction and exhortation: Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 14:26-33
- Singing: 1 Cor. 14:15, 26
- Prayer: 1 Cor. 14:15-17
- Discerning/understanding the teaching: 1 Cor. 14:29
- Conviction of a non-Christian: 1 Cor. 14:23-25

There were other assemblies that were called for specific purposes in which all of the members did not necessarily participate.

- Establishing plans, making decisions: Acts 6:1-5, 15:22
- Selection and appointment of special servants: Acts 6:5-6
- Reporting matters of spiritual concern: Acts 14:27

- Confronting an impenitent brother, and delivering him to Satan: 1 Cor. 5:4-5, Matt. 18:17

As we can readily see, some activities in New Testament involved the assemblies where all were gathered together and some were more limited assemblies in which there were certain ones who gathered to discuss a specific problem(s). Not all activities in each meeting or assembly were acts of worship. Though we worship when all are gathered together, the scriptures do not specifically command his children to have a "worship service" as some speak of it. The purpose given for all activity in the assemblies when all were gathered together was to 'edify' (1 Cor. 14:26).

One of the activities carried on during a specific assembly is remembering the Lord's death. The Lord's Supper is to be observed on the first day of the week—each Lord's Day. Another duty we have when we assemble together on the first day of the week is to give as we have been prospered. Other activities are not so regulated. Some naturally would be included in most (if not all) assemblies (e.g. teaching/preaching and prayer), while others would be carried out only at specific times (e.g. the Lord's Supper and giving).

Regarding the assembly, (which is the same Greek word as is translated church—literally the called out ones), Paul says in 1 Cor. 14:34-35: "Let the women keep silent in the churches (assemblies); for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. 35 And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church (assemblies). " **Ladies, this is not talking about a building the church owns. This is talking about an assembly of the saints wherever they all gather together and where Christ is present** (Matt. 18:20).

1 CORINTHIANS 14:26 IS A 'COVERALL' RULE TO DEFINE ALL ASSEMBLIES WHERE ALL ARE GATHERED TOGETHER. "How is it then, brethren? **when ye come together**, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." In Matthew 18:20, Jesus promises that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be there in the midst of them. Consider this question: **When Jesus is present, should we follow His rules or not?** If we don't follow his rules when He is present with us, will He bless our assembly or not?

Finally, Titus 2:3-4 tells us that there is a time when the women are commanded to teach women. The older women are specifically authorized to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5). The Lord speaks through Paul to say that he does not permit a woman to teach (a man) **nor** to usurp authority over a man (1 Tim. 2:11-15). **She is to learn in silence.** Some redefine the word 'nor' in the expression "to teach nor to usurp authority" to mean "in such a

way as to." Yes, they actually redefine the scripture to say: I permit not a woman to teach "in such a way as to" usurp authority over the man. That little Greek word '*hode*' has never been so translated by any dictionary I have ever seen. The author of the Greek dictionary may add his commentary after the literal definition of the word, but I have never seen a **literal definition** of '*hode*' to be defined as "in such a way as to." The Lord **does not permit *either* action**—he does not permit a woman to teach (in context, a Christian man) ***nor*** to usurp authority over the man. She is to learn in silence, with all subjection. Some make a distinction between the 'silence' in 1 Cor. 14:34 and 1 Tim 2:11-12, but the 1 Tim 2 silence is literally defined in Strong's as "stillness, i.e. desistance from bustle or language," and in Thayer's as "stillness and silence." That should be rather plain to every one of us.

MAY WOMEN HOLD AN OFFICE IN THE CHURCH TODAY?

Some women demand to hold an office in the church and so they want to label what they do a **ministry** or some similar title. Remember Thomas and Alexander Campbell's famous statement which became the motto of the Restoration Movement: **"We must speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where the Bible is silent, call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways."** That statement did not come from scripture and so holds no authority in itself, but it very closely follows Christ's pattern (John 12:49-50) and the apostles' pattern (1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Pet 1:20-21).

Now let us answer the question about whether women may hold an office in the church. First read the qualification of elders and deacons in (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-13).

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain **elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers (Titus 1:5-9).

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a **bishop**, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Likewise must the **deacons** (an office) be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the **office of a deacon**, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the **office of a deacon** well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 3:1-13).

It would **seem** that there might be an office in the next passage: "And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of **Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven**; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:8-9). The qualification and assignment for the seven men in Acts 6:1-6 are both dramatically different, which strongly indicates that these brethren did not hold an office, but were assigned a work.

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a **servant** of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (Rom. 16:1-2). Even though Phebe is called, a servant of the church in Cenchrea, she is not an office holder—not a deacon or a deaconess. She does not meet the qualifications laid down for a deacon in (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

What is the source of all other titles of offices in the church today? The denominational world has assigned titles to various "ministries," which reveals the obvious source for the newly adopted pattern in the church. As we see below, there is nothing in the scriptures that would begin to indicate the pattern used by the denominations or some liberal churches of Christ today.

The word *ministry*—as defined in a modern dictionary

1. The service, functions, or profession of a minister of religion.
2. The body or class of ministers of religion; clergy.
3. The service, function, or office of a minister of state.

4. The body of ministers of state.
5. (*Usually cap.*) any of the administrative governmental departments of certain countries usually under the direction of a minister of state.
6. (*Usually cap.*) the building that houses such an administrative department.
7. The term of office of a minister of state.
8. An act or instance of ministering; ministration; service.
9. Something that serves as an agency, instrument, or means.

THE WORD *MINISTER* IS DEFINED IN SCRIPTURE AS:

- NT: **1248** diakonia (dee-ak-on-ee'-ah); from NT: 1249; **attendance** (as a servant, etc.); figuratively (eleemosynary) aid, (official) service (especially of the Christian teacher, or techn. of the diaconate):
- NT: **1249** diakonos (dee-ak'-on-os); probably from an obsolete diako (**to run on errands**; compare NT: 1377); **an attendant**, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess):

THE FOLLOWING '*MINISTERS*' ARE DESCRIBED IN GOD'S WORD:

- Deacons are given the title of this office (1 Tim. 3:10, 13).
- Elders are given the title of an office (1 Tim. 3:1).
- The apostles were given the title of a ministry (Acts 1:17; Acts 1:25; Acts 20:24; Rom. 11:13; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:11).
- Old Testament Priests were given the title of office (Luke 1:8-9; Heb. 7:5; Heb. 9:21).
- He uses the term *office* (literally practice or deeds) for the different works of the church (Rom. 12:4).
- The apostles had the work of ministering of the word but had no title (Acts 6:4).
- The Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas to a specific work but they had no title (Acts 12:25; Acts 21:19; 2 Cor. 4:1; 2 Cor. 6:3).
- According to the definition this was menial service of any kind but there was no title (Rom. 12:7).
- Stephanus was giving menial service to his brethren but had no title (1 Cor. 16:15).

- The apostles were given the “ministry of reconciliation” which **could be** a title, but no one uses that title today. (2 Cor. 5:18).
- Whatever ministry this is it is not given a title (Eph. 4:12).
- God gave Archippus a specific service to do, but gave it no title (Col. 4:17).
- Timothy was given a service to do but given no title for it (2 Tim. 4:5).
- Christ was given a ministry on earth but no title is given to it (Heb. 8:6)

Notice that to none of the ministries mentioned in the New Testament has a title been given with the exception of the **apostles, elders** and **deacons**. We do not read of women’s ministries; single’s ministries; music ministries; outreach ministries; youth ministries or any other kind of ministries in scripture other than what is described in these passages. Modern religion allows for everyone (including the women) to have a ministry of some sort, and where is it getting them? Souls are being lost day after day; churches are splitting and we are not able to recover many. The churches have become social organizations and platforms for exhibitionist. When we have any "elite group" that has to do all the singing (whether it is called a ministry or not), we have digressed. The group that operates under a “music ministry” may not be called a chorus or choir, but that is what it is if I cannot stand up with them and sing if I want to.

I hope these scriptures help you to understand the plan our Heavenly Father has for women’s work in the church. **No matter one’s age or status, these rules apply to every woman of God.**

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN WOMAN’S WORK?

WHAT WOMEN CAN DO

Gary Summers

One need only look at the Bible to find ways to be a great servant in the kingdom of God. The first way is suggested in 1 Peter 3:1-2, which involves **setting a good example for an unbelieving husband**. Undoubtedly, many men have been converted by this means. An unblemished life constitutes a powerful sermon, and it can be preached in eloquent silence.

Second, a woman can be a godly influence in her home--not only upon her husband but upon her children. How was Moses able to make the right decisions (Heb. 11:24-26)? Was not the reason that he had been taught by his mother? Even though Timothy's father was a Greek, his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were positive influences in his life. Were it not for their

faith, there might have been one less gospel preacher (2 Tim. 1:5). Many of life's valuable lessons have been learned at a tender age from mothers.

Women are certainly free with respect to performing acts of kindness. Dorcas was described as "full of good works and charitable deeds" (Acts 9:36). Some ladies reflect great talent in this area and are appreciated as much as anyone in the church. When Peter arrived, "all the widows stood by him weeping," her loss was so great to them (Acts 9:39). Women often "take the lead" in thoughtfulness and kindness.

Hospitality is yet another area in which women excel. The Shunammite woman made Elisha's journey more comfortable (2 Kings 4:8-10). Lydia insisted that Paul and Silas stay in her house (Acts 16:15). Only the women who had practiced hospitality were allowed to be enrolled as those the church would fully support (1 Tim. 5:9-10).

Many women have engaged in personal evangelism--sometimes helping their husbands, sometimes doing it on their own. Aquila and Priscilla were a team that was discussed previously. Today a number of women who are not in the public work force might show interest in a Bible study. There are also single women, including mothers, who stand in need of the gospel. There is the inspiring story of Elizabeth Bernard, who (though legally blind) went to a foreign country and entrenched herself in the mission work there. The woman who so devotes herself to endeavors like these will be rejoicing so much in the harvest of souls that she will not have time to pity herself because she is excluded from the public proclamation of the Word.

Women have proven themselves to be excellent teachers. Not only have they exercised considerable influence in their own homes, but they have edified many other people's children by virtue of the Bible classes they teach. They can be particularly valuable at teaching younger women the will of God (Titus 2:3-5).

So far we have seen the freedom women have and the possibilities in the realms of evangelism, education, benevolence, and hospitality. Their godly example in the home and in the church is inestimable. Anything we have missed can probably be summed up by saying that she can be a servant. Anyone who aspires to greatness must travel on the pathway of servanthood.

Jesus was speaking to the multitudes and His disciples when He said: "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:11). The multitudes included women, and women were not excluded or limited in any form or fashion. Equally generic is Paul's declaration that "the whole body" is "joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share," which results in growth of the body (Eph. 4:16).

We are not told of any women in the upper room for the "last supper," but Jesus took a towel and, by washing their feet, showed His dumbfounded disciples a lesson in love, humility, and service. Certainly no one is forbidden on the basis of gender to practice these great virtues. The New Testament reveals a multitude of opportunities for women to serve. Every congregation of God's people usually has more work than it can accomplish. Most of these tasks do not involve exercising leadership over men, but they are necessary nevertheless.

Barnabas was known as the Son of Encouragement (Acts 4:36) because he possessed that outstanding quality. Many sisters in the kingdom could rightly be called Daughters of Encouragement for the spiritual boost they have given to young preachers, song leaders, and Bible class teachers. (Some have occasionally given some helpful advice, also).

Society practices this precept all the time in relation to sporting events. The runner is cheered on to victory. In team sports the announcer will sometimes observe, "The crowd is getting into the game," meaning that, after a period of relative silence, they have begun cheering and trying to pump up the players. In basketball or hockey arenas the female fans do not say, "I am not going to cheer because no women are on the team." The ladies who attend these events encourage the players as loudly as they can.

In the Lord's church men have been appointed for leadership roles. Yes, women are excluded from that privilege; so are some men. Those who (for whatever reason) cannot lead can certainly encourage those who have devoted themselves to those various tasks. In the body of Christ, not everyone gets to be the eyes, the ears, or the tongue. But everyone contributes to the well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:12-27). Concerning restrictions, whether natural or divine, we may all learn contentment by accepting and doing those things for which we are qualified.

The above article was taken from "Role of Women in the Church (part 5)" (<http://www.spiritualperspectives.org/articles/documents/role5.html>)

OTHER PRACTICAL WORKS A WOMAN MAY DO:

It is especially rewarding to be able to go visit various congregations in our area and see how they are doing and to encourage them. It is good to help the ladies learn in the ladies Bible classes and to train them to teach their children. Helping a sister to make a special communion cloth so she can feel she has contributed to the overall work is a great way to spend the day. **Tutoring village women and children and helping them to become literate in order to read the Bible is also rewarding.**



Some time ago, I read an article entitled "Interruptions." It was about how those things that often frustrate us in our daily routines really should be considered as opportunities. The article referenced a day in the life of Jesus and showed how so many interruptions came to Him as He was on the way to do other good works. His reaction was not to feel oppressed by the interruptions that came to him, but to use those times to heal or teach. Such should be our reaction to the days of our lives that just don't seem to go as planned.

TO THOSE LADIES WHO ARE LONELY, let me say plainly that you should be the one who approaches others to give them love and comfort. Knowing how it feels to be lonely and afraid should make you more compassionate to others who might feel the same way. There is always someone less fortunate than you. Take your tape recorder or CD player and go to visit a home for the aged or critically ill. Play Bible tapes or even acappella singing of hymns. So many people in the nursing homes never have a chance to go to church because there is nobody to take them. Women can take a copy of Sunday's sermon and play that for shut-ins or even for a whole group who might be willing to listen. It does not have to be on a Sunday afternoon; it can be anytime! In fact it can be every day of the week if we women are willing to do it.

God bless you all as you seek to please Him. Never forget to search the scriptures to remind yourself of what you know to do. Everyone has a copy of the Bible to read and study every day. There should be no problem finding plenty to read and study.

QUESTIONS:

1. We see that our Heavenly Father was the one in control of organizing and teaching in the early church. We know that He was working through the Holy Spirit to direct what was taught. What scripture explains that process?
2. There are differences in “things attended to,” differences in *attendances*, (the same word used for deacon), differences in administrations, but the same Lord. Though there were many administrations, the early Christians were not confused because the Lord directing them. What scripture tells us about this difference?
3. Notice again in _____ that there are diversities of operations.
4. What was the purpose of giving the manifestation of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7)?
5. How did the church “profit” by the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:1-6)?
6. What is the purpose of the assembly itself (1 Cor. 14:26)?
7. Every part of the body was used to help the whole body grow spiritually—grow in love for God and one another. Give a scripture that explains that process.
8. God was actively making sure the faithful children in the early church were given the revelation of truth they needed. What was this process (Philippians 3:15)?
9. We can compare the work in Jesus church to a _____ body (1 Cor. 12:12).
10. What scripture tells us why each member has a special part in the work of the Lord so that there will be no “schism” or division?
11. If God was fully at work in the early church, making sure every Christian was fed spiritual food and receiving the edification he needed, what should

we expect today? _____ tells us that God is still working literally everything for the good of his chosen people. (The blank requires a scripture reference.)

12. Does Jesus love his church today? What example does He give to prove this love?
13. List several ways a woman may serve the congregation where she attends.
14. List the ways (using scripture examples) a woman may **not** serve the congregation where she attends.
15. How did Phebe serve the church?
16. In what specific ways could a woman qualify her husband for becoming a deacon?
17. In what specific ways could a woman qualify her husband for becoming an elder?
18. How was a widow qualified to be "enrolled" or on support as a widow?
19. Is lack of education or physical handicap an excuse for not serving the Lord? Why not?
20. **RESEARCH: To whom did the Lord write the scriptures?** (1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Cor. 1:11; 1 Cor. 1:26; 1 Cor. 2:1; 1 Cor. 3:1; 1 Cor. 4:6; 1 Cor. 7:24, 29; 1 Cor. 10:1; 1 Cor. 11:2, 33; 1 Cor. 12:1; 1 Cor. 14:6; 20; 26, 34, 39; 1 Cor. 15:1, 50, 58; 1 Cor. 16:15; Eph. 5:22, Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6)? Were they written to men, to men and women, or just to women? **Name three specific scriptures where the Lord directly addresses the women and tell what the subject is each time?**

UNDERSTANDING MY HUSBAND'S ROLE

Lesson 8

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

When one young couple decided to make a commitment to each other and to God, they selected their wedding rings and had them engraved. The message inside read, "Together for HIM" (plus the date they were to make their vows).

What did all that mean? It meant that they were committing their lives to each other, and to God, for His work. The rings were testimony of their intentions. The young man had long wanted to preach the gospel, and the girl had dreamed of being a preacher's wife. Goals had been set; plans were being made. Each had adjustments to make in order to meet expectations. They knew there would be hardships, but they were willing to face those obstacles together. They knew there would be criticism (they had no idea how much!), but they were willing to face that too. As a preacher's family, they knew they would live "in the proverbial glass house," but they knew the rewards would far outweigh the temporary, earthly sadness. When they considered what was really important in life, they wanted to be pleasing to the Lord by reaching out to His other disciples and to the lost, but they also had to keep the success of their own marriage in mind. What would God have them do that would enable them to keep their eyes on the mark He had set for them?

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Cor. 9:24). Everyone who determines to "run the race" must resolve to "stick with it." They must see and understand the steps necessary to reach the goal. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). Whether it is new Christians or a newly married couple, they must keep their eyes on the mark that will give them the prize. They must work toward having a marriage that will not only glorify God, but also fulfill their own expectations.

Their goal would help them be victorious in bringing many souls to salvation. The goal this young couple had in mind was to do whatever they did in word or deed all in His name, and for His sake. They understood that Christians are to serve the Lord by (among other things) learning to love the brethren. Being in the position they had chosen would give them ample opportunity.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from

the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me (Matt. 25:34-40).

In the art of marriage, it is the little things that can become big things. Marriage is the most important commitment besides our original decision to become a child of God. The marriage of two dedicated Christians can be a force for God that no other force should overcome. However, there will be rocks in the road—especially for the preacher and his wife. Being constantly on display, like preachers' families are, is one of the biggest hurdles any couple has to face. They, of all people, must keep their focus on God and the work He has given every Christian to do, if the rest is to fall into place.

Preacher, what is your life?

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

With most preachers, poverty is a litmus test for them and their families. There is no doubt that some, good-looking, charismatic preachers may be able to earn more than the average engineer or business employee, but this is far from the norm. Those men may demand an unreasonable salary from large churches, while the average pulpit minister or evangelist is earning less than minimum wage for much harder work. Is his wife willing to live on the salary the poor preacher provides? Is the family able to live, pay bills and be self-respecting? When a couple is young and just beginning a work, who can know what the future holds? But the very real possibility of poverty may loom on the horizon.

Preachers often are forced to move from place to place when they and the congregation do not agree. Breaking up housekeeping and moving to an unknown place can be traumatic. In fact it can tear a family apart. Many times preacher's wives or children become emotionally unstable because they have no roots, no security. Sometimes the preacher's wife will refuse to move, ultimately forcing the preacher to find other employment. The wife's attitude toward this nomadic existence takes yet another preacher out of a pulpit.

Preacher families cannot be slaves of material things and be pleasing to God. This world is not our home. "And [Job] said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:21-22). Solomon also said, "As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand (Ecc. 5:15). With poverty and loss being a major issue in many preachers lives, will the wife still be willing to commit to the work? Will they together be able to train their children to live on less and not be embittered? All these things must be considered before they begin their journey together, before they take the initial step to decide on a career. After making that decision, they must focus beyond the temporary into the eternal.

WHY DO SOME PREACHERS TODAY LIVE LIKE PHARISEES AND HYPOCRITES (Matt. 6:5)?

Probably the greatest temptation for some preachers and their families is to live like the Pharisees and hypocrites described in Matthew 23:5-7. They feel they must sing better and louder than anyone in the congregation. They want to know more and appear to be better than anyone. Their kids have to be the smartest or the prettiest and most popular. Their cars have to be bigger and go faster and their good deeds must be seen of men to be a "showcase" for all. "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul" (Job 27:8)?

The book of Matthew has much to say about this type of person. "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matt. 6:2). "...And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matt. 6:5). "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matt. 6:16).

The very real temptation is for preachers and their wives to tell others how to live and what they are doing wrong, while they themselves have many "unresolved issues" in their own family relationships. "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5). They seem to be pillars of the church, yet they may only make a mockery of religion in their private lives. "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth

nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:7-8).

Not all people are blind to this inconsistency and may be soured on Christianity as a whole because they see the insincerity in the preacher's family or in the lives of others in the leadership. "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:13). These men may harp on the subject of giving and expect (or demand) that they be given high salaries—far above the people who are supporting them. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23:14-15).

Preachers and their wives sometimes demand that the congregation live by the "letter of the law," but they themselves will not do as much in their private lives. They may bind heavy burdens on the members and ultimately cause them to lose their souls because they cannot meet expectations and thus become discouraged. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess" (Matt. 23:23-25). "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt. 23:27-28).

Consider seriously, wives of preachers! Are you what you appear to be? Are you for real? "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

EVERY PREACHER MUST BE A SERVANT IN THE CHURCH

There are many members, many offices and differing gifts. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom. 12:4-8).

A man who is a leader in the church can be an evangelist, an elder, teacher or a preacher. There are many other ways to serve such as deacon, Bible class teacher, song leader or prayer leader. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). We should all be zealous to seek to excel in edifying the fellow members of Jesus' body (1 Cor. 14:12). No matter what his position in the church, the man needs to be diligent and faithful to follow the pattern laid down for that position. He must do his work well. His priority should be to qualify for those positions in order to edify the body of Christ—the church.

ALL CHRISTIAN MEN SHOULD BE GOOD PROVIDERS AND GOOD EMPLOYEES

So why would young ladies need to know what the men are supposed to do? Why would they want to study the roles and responsibilities of a husband and father? Perhaps the best reason is that **she should know what to look for in a mate.** She should understand what is expected and be ready to make judgments about the caliber of person she is thinking of taking for her life's companion. This is a lesson that young ladies need to learn so they can understand the role each man must take—in his physical family as well as in the family of God. She should be a willing participant in his work—one who is a *help meet* and not a hindrance. Being able to understand and support his position is paramount to having a good relationship.

Every man must work to provide for himself. If the preacher gets paid, that is his work. No Christian male should "free load" on others or depend on others to provide his living. The Apostle Paul told the Thessalonians, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that **if any would not work, neither should he eat**" (2 Thess. 3:10). In the very beginning of the chapter, Paul admonished them to behave in such a manner as not to bring shame on the church. In today's society, there are many men who have no intentions of ever earning an honest living. They seem to think that from the time they are born, someone else owes them a living. This is a great shame for them and their families whether or not they think so. Honest, sincere Christians are supposed to "withdraw themselves" from any man who will not work. Paul himself did not behave in such a way that he would bring shame on the church. He worked with his hands to build tents even when he could easily have demanded money from other Christians

for preaching the gospel to them (1 Cor. 9:9, 14). Many lazy men will do nothing but cause trouble and be busybodies in the community. They have nothing better to do because they are not gainfully employed. Hard work never killed anyone. Hard work is an honor, not a dishonor to any man.

A man should provide for his own family. In the context of teaching Christian ethics to all age groups, the Apostle Paul told Timothy, “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8). This is a pretty strong warning for all the men in the church. Each male must consider who he is responsible for, whether it is an aged mother and father, his own wife and children or even an aged aunt (1 Tim 5:4). He has to find a way to provide food, clothing and shelter for these people who are dependent upon him. It is not the business of the government or the church to support these people, as long as he is healthy and able to work.

The man is to work to give to those who are in need. “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). Even though our government has generally made it very convenient for the poor to have their basic needs met, there are still some people who are without many things they need to function. Sometimes, these people may be in temporary hardship, but quite often there are those who will never be able to provide for themselves. They may be orphaned children, the aged, or mentally incompetent, or even sickly folk. If a Christian man does what he is supposed to do, he will be able to give a portion of what he earns to those who need help. Christian women must understand that this is required of their husbands, sons and fathers and not expect them to spend everything they earn for the immediate family.

The man is to work to give to the church—actually to the Lord. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Husbands, fathers and all adult men should put this duty foremost in their plans every week or at least every time they get paid. Wives should not begrudge what husbands “lay by in store” for the Lord. If there is a true union between husband and wife, the weekly contribution to the Lord’s work can be a joint gift, bringing joy and blessing to them both as a unit. The wife should rejoice that she has joined with her ‘partner’ in laying up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). She receives as much credit with the Lord as he does, if she has a willing heart (2 Cor. 8:12).

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart,

fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, *as to the Lord*, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons (Col. 3:22-25).

Sometimes preachers think they are above this scripture and believe they are the final authority in every discussion business meetings or elder's meetings. No one likes to lose his freedom, but that is exactly what happens when a man accepts a position of employment. After becoming employed, he has to do the will of the earthly master whether or not he agrees with his judgment (not including differences doctrine). He can rebel, but the Lord warns that what a man does to the earthly master, he does to the one who gave him authority over him (Rom. 13:1-2). On the other hand, when a man willingly submits to an earthly employer, understanding that he is submitting to his Creator and Lord, it is much easier to give willing service. Jesus promised to reward us for all of our willing service (1 Cor. 9:17). The husband is in authority over the wife, and if she submits to the husband, understanding that she is actually submitting to the one who gave the authority to her husband, Jesus promises He will reward her as she serves.

As an employee (servant), a Christian man is to obey with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ. Employers (masters) have responsibilities also.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him (Eph. 6:5-9).

It is so easy to bad-mouth the *boss* and disrespect him. **In the case of a preacher, who is his boss?** We know that a bad relationship between a preacher and his elders or his congregation can cause division in the congregation or even the whole church. Men who do not respect their employers do not respect the one who gave the employers the position over them. Employees (in this case the preacher) have to remember they are serving the employer (the elders) just as if they were serving Jesus himself. Elders are the overseers (bosses), but if/when they are wrong in something they are saying or doing, what is the preacher's job then? Either the preacher has to follow the Matthew 18 formula for restoring peace or he has to address

the wrong doctrine they are teaching or practicing. There should never be a personal fight for power.

HUSBAND, FATHER AND LEADER IN THE CHURCH

We have examined suggested roles and responsibilities of the men, which include being a good servant in the church—a teacher, song leader, preacher, deacon or elder—with each position always ministering to the saints. Day after day, his decisions should be based on these roles.

On a more basic level, we see that a man who becomes a husband is to leave his father and mother to be joined to his wife, to become her head, to love her as Christ loved the church and as he loves himself and his own body, to nourish and cherish her (Eph. 5:22-33). As he becomes a father, another role or responsibility is born. He is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, not provoking them to wrath (Eph. 6:1).

WHAT IS A GOOD HUSBAND?

God is the one who established the family in the beginning, and God has given the husband a very important position in the family. **The husband is meant to be the head of the family.** He is responsible for leading the family in the ways of God. The husband needs to understand the covenant of marriage and his responsibilities towards his wife as part of that covenant. And he needs to understand his authority in the family and how to exercise it.

Is there any commitment more serious than the marriage covenant? God's judgment is that covenant breakers are worthy of death (Rom. 1:31-32). If we break our marriage vows (covenant), God will be angry with our voice and destroy the work of our hands (Eccl. 5:4-6). **Keeping the covenant includes honoring the wife, not just avoiding adultery** (1 Pet. 3:7). The husband's prayers can become hindered if he does not honor his wife.

God is the one who joins the husband and wife in marriage (Matt. 19:6). The husband and wife are to leave the parents (Matt. 19:5), because God, in his wisdom, says it is best for the couple to maintain their own household. If the couple is not autonomous, we can expect problems in the home. Young men and women must consider this teaching *before* they make a marriage commitment and determine whether they have enough financial resources and physical ability to make a separate home.

The man must make the final decisions for the entire family, including the children (1 Tim. 3:12). We know that God will hold the father responsible for bringing up the children (Eph. 6:4). Who is it that will have to answer on Judgment Day if the children are not brought up correctly? Fathers

must teach and train the children (Deut. 6:6-7). Naturally the wife, as his help meet, has her part in training the children too, but the father will be held accountable if the job is not done well.

The husband is responsible for providing for his wife and family. He must consider their physical needs as his priority. This responsibility was established from the beginning (Gen. 3:17-19). If he forsakes this duty, he is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:8). Whether his wife is a believer or a non-believer, the husband has responsibilities to her. As a Christian, he must teach her and lead her toward Christ. If his wife is a believer, he still has the responsibility to teach her and answer her questions regarding all matters spiritual (1 Cor. 14:35). A Christian husband serves Christ by serving his wife as Christ has decreed. He is to love and serve her as Christ loves the church; he is to give himself for her. He is to love and serve her as his own body (Eph. 5:25-28). Does Christ serve the church by beating her? Does Christ serve the church by ignoring her needs and putting Himself first? Does Christ serve the church by being lazy and demanding or by letting the church do His job of being the head? We have already learned that a man's prayers to God will be hindered if he does not honor his wife as the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7). What greater way could the man serve God than by serving his wife for the Lord's sake and doing it the Lord's way! **What greater way could the father of a family train his children than to love their mother the way the Lord has commanded!**

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GOOD FATHER?

Eli did not handle his authority well, and God promised to destroy Eli's *house* (1 Sam. 2:27-30). Although they were His leading priests, Eli's sons did not know God (1 Sam. 2:12-17). We read where Eli tried to rebuke them (1 Sam. 2:22-25), but what did Eli do wrong?

1. Eli honored his sons above God (1 Sam. 2:29).
2. Eli accept the offerings which his sons had stolen (1 Sam. 2:29).
3. As God's High Priest (the highest authority in Israel), Eli did not forcibly restrain his children when they were vile (1 Sam. 3:12-14).

Like Adam, Eli could have blamed his wife, and who can say she was not to blame (Gen. 3:12)? However, Fathers are given a responsibility by God (Eph. 6:4). A Father must find a way to fulfill that responsibility even if he has to make a choice with whom to contend (Matt. 10:37). Our God may bring fathers such a test to see whom they will choose (Matt. 10:34). One way or another, fathers must pass the test in righteousness.

We know that some of the father's deeds are passed down to the children (Exod. 20:5-6); however, there is a difference between *visiting* and *bearing* (Ezek. 18:20). **Bearing the sin** is to answer for an action on

Judgment Day. **Visiting the iniquity** has to do with suffering for the father's evil *in this life*. For example: the children of Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness, and suffered greatly. This punishment was the result of sin caused by the fathers, but the young children had to endure it along with them. Often a drunkard's children are mistreated, or not well cared for, because of their father's sinful lifestyle. We may not understand the full implications, but this is the glory of God (Exod. 34:5-7).

Under the Law of Moses, fathers were given the responsibility to teach children (Deut. 6:6-7). True, there were many who did not obey that law, but like Eli, they will answer for their disobedience. True also, many did teach their children faithfully. One of the greatest attributes of Abraham was faithfulness to teach his children (Gen. 18:19). Moses' mother taught him well. Timothy's grandmother and mother were faithful to teach him. Under the Old Testament Law, fathers had great authority in the home (Num. 12:14). They could disallow their daughter's vow (Num. 30:4-5). They could also have their disobedient children stoned to death (Deut. 21:18-21).

Fathers have a different kind of authority under Christ's law in the New Testament (Matt. 20:25-26). We see from reading Philemon 8, 9 that Paul did not use the authority he had. Fathers today may humble themselves like Paul and be very gentle (1 Thess. 2:6-7). If the Corinthians had not listened to Paul's kindness, he would have used his authority (2 Cor. 13:2, 10). It was the same situation in 2 Corinthians 10:2. Twenty-three times Paul is recorded as **beseeking** his brethren to respond to God's commands. Will our Father be kind to us if we are not kind to those under our authority (Matt. 7:2)? If we are not kind to our children God will not be kind to us (James 2:13). Notice in Ephesians 6:4 that the first part of the command is "don't provoke." The reason is given—so they are not discouraged (Col. 3:21). **A wise man is even kind to animals, how much more to his own children** (Prov. 12:10).

Our Father encourages us to listen to His correction (Heb. 12:5). We should do the same for our children and also encourage them to listen to us. A good father exhorts and comforts his children (1 Thess. 2:11). The prodigal son's father had every right to use his authority to command, but he did not (Luke 15:31-32). God expects us to listen to our children's entreaties and pleading (1 Tim. 5:1). God's elder is also expected to listen to the congregation's entreaties (James 3:17). Job listened to his servants' entreaties (Job 31:13-15).

Christian fathers should train their children as God trains us (Heb. 12:10). God chastens His children (Heb. 12:5). He chastens and scourges every son whom He loves (Heb. 12:6). Some people refuse to use the rod because they think they *love their children too much* (Pro. 13:24). What does God say about our love if we refuse to use the rod? The Lord tells us only one

way to get rid of a child's foolishness (Pro. 22:15). Our chastening can deliver our child's soul from hell (Pro. 23:14). Our correction of children should not be for our own convenience (Heb. 12:10). Some men use children (and members of church) as slaves, to do their running for them. Our children should be convinced that we are doing whatever we do for their growth and not for our convenience.

The preacher's children are often the worst children in a congregation (Matt. 23:5). Why is that? A preacher father may correct his children by saying, "What will the members think?" These are words of hypocrisy. If we are sincerely seeking to please God we should give our children the motivation to do the same thing. Sincere Christians should not consider what others think for their own reputation but for the **other person's edification** (1 Cor. 10:33). Our children can easily tell if we are insincere (Luke 12:1). Our children should be taught to seek to please God (1 Thess. 2:4). This is a constant appeal in God's word (1 Thess. 4:1). Our children need the mind of Christ (John 6:29). Jesus had one motive in mind at all times (John 5:19, 30).

A man's children should only be concerned with what God thinks (Pro. 10:1; 13:1). They also should be taught *not* to receive praise from men (Rom. 2:28-29). Receiving man's praise will destroy their faith (John 5:44). Jesus did not receive honor from men (John 5:41). The world claims that it sits at the feet of those who learn how to praise. If we praise children they will sit at our feet. This works for children and naïve adults too, but what does our God say? Praising children for physical things trains them to value mammon (Luke 16:15). When we thrill the hearts of our children with promises of gifts for birthdays, Christmas and so on, we are training them to be thrilled with more and more material things. Some say, "Don't be such a kill-joy—they only live once!"

If there is not a difference between church leaders and the people in the world, something is terribly wrong (1 John 4:5-6). Our children must understand that they are not of the world (James 4:4). Jesus did not identify himself with this world (John 8:23). Jesus calls his faithful apart from the world (John 15:18-19). We have to understand that the world is our enemy to overcome (John 16:33). The apostles were faithful in separating themselves from the world (John 17:14-16). If our children identify with democracy, socialism or any worldly nation, they are identifying with the world (Isa. 55:8-9). The world has its own standards of right and wrong (Luke 16:15). If our children identify with God's people, spiritual Israel, the church, they will have a different mind. Our father Abraham is our example in this regard; he left his country (Heb. 11:8). He identified himself as a stranger (Heb. 11:9). Abraham's real nation was not on earth (Heb. 11:10). All of God's faithful should have this mind (Heb. 11:13). All of God's faithful are seeking their real nation the heavenly home (Heb. 11:14-16)

QUESTIONS:

Part A: Please give full sentence answers and a scripture reference to prove your answers.

1. Why do ladies need to study the responsibilities of men in the church?
2. What is wrong with being lazy and letting someone else feed you?
3. What is wrong with not providing for yourself and your family?
4. Why should you work to give to the poor?
5. Why do you need to give to the church (to the Lord)?
6. If the wife does not earn money, does she really have any part in the giving?
7. Why should you respect your employer?
8. If you are an employer, how should you treat your employees?
9. Should the "feeble folk" be given a job to do in the church?
10. Is the office of deacon or elder supposed to be for honor (the praise of men) or for service to the church? Explain the difference.

Part B: Fill in the blanks with the correct word or phrase. Some answers require a scripture reference.

11. _____ tells us that if a man does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.
12. "...if any would not work, neither should he eat" (_____).
13. Each employee should obey the "master" as he would obey Christ _____.
14. Every man is to lay something aside to give on the first day of the week _____.

15. Each person is to seek to excel in edifying the body of Christ.

16. Every adult man in the church should work with his hands so that he may have something to give to anyone in need _____.
17. How do we know that each position in the church is given according to the grace shown by Christ? _____
18. Masters (employers) should not threaten, remembering they also have a master in Heaven _____.
19. We know from _____ that even the feeble folk have a place in the body of Christ.
20. What scripture tells us everyone has a different position in the church?

21. Why should a man leave his family to be married to a wife?
22. What decisions regarding this role must be made before marriage?
23. What are the man's responsibilities to his wife in the marriage contract?
24. What are the man's roles in leading the family?
25. What decisions might the man have to make in each a role?
26. What are the man's responsibilities in child bearing?
27. What responsibilities does the man have regarding the church family?
28. If these roles are not discussed in a neutral setting before marriage, what assurance will a prospective bride have that her choice of a husband is a good one?

SUBMISSION TO MY HUSBAND

Lesson 9

WHO SHOULD BE THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY?

Read slowly and carefully: 1 Cor. 11:3. Can there be any doubt whom God has chosen to be head of the family? Also read Eph. 5:22-24.

- "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3).
- "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 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. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Eph. 5:22-24).

Our basic understanding on this topic should be that God has given us a unique and wonderful role as women that no one else can fill. Being placed in this position by our Father has nothing to do with our intelligence or importance. It is simply the place He has chosen for us. In that role, if we fulfill it well, according as God has commanded, we have opportunities to do **much** good, and certainly never a lack of good things to do, both physically and in the hearts of others. If we are dissatisfied in our position simply because we are not **first** or **chief,** both in our families and in the church, how is it that we are any different than Korah, who was chosen by God for a **very** important office (to be the caretaker of the ark of the covenant, which no one else was allowed to touch. (See Num. 8:6-8; Num. 8:15-16; Num. 8:24 and esp. 1 Chron. 9:19). Yet, in his pride and greed for power, he wanted to be the highest ruler instead. His unusual death shows what God thought of his dissatisfaction, and usurping authority that God had chosen to give to another.

"Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?" (Num. 16:9-10).

Are we operating out of ignorance of how the body of Christ is made up, or are we determined to ignore the system our Heavenly Father has put in place for our good and the good of the church (1 Cor. 12:13-25)?

HOW SHOULD WE VIEW OUR SUBSERVIENT ROLE AS WOMEN? DO WE VIEW IT AS AN INSULT OR AS AN HONOR?

Sarah filled her position well, and is called a mother of nations, and held up for an example for all of us:

- A. "And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her" (Gen. 17:15-16).
- B. "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement" (1 Pet. 3:4-6).

WHAT ABOUT A PEOPLE THAT JUST DIDN'T LIKE WHO THEIR RULER WAS, AND WANTED TO CHANGE THE "SYSTEM?"

- A. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them (1 Sam. 8:4-7).
- B. "And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you" (1 Sam. 12:1-19).
- C. "And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king" (1 Sam. 12:19). They knew their rebellion was not pleasing to God and they knew that God ruled them through the judges. So essentially they were rejecting God Himself.

NOTICE TWO EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO REFUSED GOD'S CHOSEN RULERS

- A. John says, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Therefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (3 John 9-10). Diotrephes wanted to be first and only in the congregation; he wanted full control. Even if he had been an elder, his personal authority would be nothing without the other elders, but what is he doing? He himself does not receive the visiting brethren and is "prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." What an evil heart this is!
- B. Korah is another example in Numbers 16:1-50: (See especially Num 16:1-11 and Num. 16:19-34). "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" (Num. 16:1-3).

What about someone who thought they were "just as good" as the ruler, and were simply *finding fault* (with seemingly justified criticism) regarding their ruler (Num. 12: 1-15)? What about a wife who thinks her subservient role was an insult to her value or to her intelligence? Women who hold higher secular degrees may lord it over their husbands as though a secular degree made the difference in a family.

If we want to change the "order" of God's authority (change the rulership—1 Cor. 11:3), wish to be the authority ourselves, or even just *find fault* with our rulers, are we any better than the people in the examples above? Can we hope to find favor with God and have our work blessed in any way?

WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE MOTIVES BEHIND THE DESIRE FOR TOP POSITION? Pride? Greed for power? Self-will and rebellion? Notice that it was "...Diotrephes, who **loveth to have the preeminence among them...**" What is the meaning of preeminence? The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and numbers says, "GREEK NT: 5383 philoproteuo (fil-op-rote-yoo'-o); from a compound of NT: 5384 and NT: 4413;

to be fond of being first, i.e. ambitious of distinction: KJV - love to have the preeminence."

Notice two examples which give further insight about the heart behind wanting preeminence—talking about the rest of the congregation that continued to rebel against Moses and Aaron's authority after Korah died.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, **to be kept for a token against the rebels**; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not" (Num. 17:10).

Notice what the Lord thought of King Saul's rebellion. How does the Heavenly Father feel about rebellion whether it comes from men or women? "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Sam. 15:23).

Do we wish we were head of the house simply because we are self-willed and don't like submitting our will to anyone else?

QUESTIONS:

1. Our schools teach that “every child is a winner.” Is it possible for everyone to be first?
2. Who will receive the greatest reward on Judgment Day, King Ahab or Sarah? Why?
3. When Sarah obeyed Abraham, did she obey Abraham as a man or did she obey Abraham in submission to God (Eph. 6:5-8)?
4. Who gave Korah his exalted position and what did he do with that position (Num. 16:9-10)?
5. Who gives each disciple of Christ his or her position in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:18)?
6. If God in His wisdom gives a soul his or her place in the family or in the church, can we trust Him to believe that is the very best position for that soul (1 Cor. 12:24)?
7. If we are last on earth, what will we be on Judgment Day (Matt. 19:30; 20:16)?
8. Would it be best to be first on earth for seventy years or so and last throughout eternity?
9. If the ear cannot say because I am not an eye I am not in the body, what do we say if we are not an elder in the church?
10. Who must be a part of the qualification of a man in order for him to be an elder? Can an elder be qualified to serve if his wife is not qualified (1 Tim. 3:2-13; Titus 1:6-7)?
11. Who will receive the greatest reward on Judgment Day, the unfaithful elder or the faithful widow?
12. Is our reward dependent on the positions we hold or on the faithfulness we demonstrate in the job we have been given?
13. Were the Israelites wise to want to change the organization God had set up (judges ruled over them) and replace the judges with a kings (1 Sam. 8:4-7)?
14. Were Aaron and Miriam wise to be dissatisfied with their places in Israel (Num. 12:1-16)?
15. Did Jesus command his disciples not to seek to be first in eternity or did he show them how to have a higher position throughout eternity (Matt. 20:25-28)?

PREPARATION FOR MOTHERHOOD

Lesson 10

**"Train up a child in the way he should go:
and when he is old, he will not depart
from it" (Prov. 22:6).**

How many times have we heard the saying: The "hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world?" It is an old proverb that expresses a profound truth. A study of the lives of Jezebel and Ahab shows the powerful influence of a mother (and father), not just over their children, but over their children's children and the nation!

The humanists today have been the primary influence in preaching equality for women for many years. Their idea was to get the woman out of the home so that they themselves could have the major influence in teaching and training the children in the nursery, daycare and public school settings. They have managed to become the major influence in almost every public or private nursery school as well as our public schools and colleges.

Now these same humanists are worried about the "ills of society" and are tracing most of these ills back to the **lack of a mother in the home**. Even the humanist say that many crimes committed by today's youth can be directly traced back to lack of a strong family unit. Sociologists are studying the problems related to weakening moral fiber in business, industry and government and also a growth in mental illness. They directly link these problems to **lack** of strong home guidance.

According to Genesis, woman has a two-fold role in family life: first as a companion to man, second, as a mother. Both are God-given roles, which she is required to fulfill according to the rules God has laid down for the home, but it is this latter role that we will be focusing on today. The mother makes a significant contribution to the family of God, the church, when she sends out well-trained children. Through molding the lives and characters of her children, she helps to guide the spiritual choices they make and thus sets them on a safe course for eternity. Happy indeed is the worthy woman whose children "rise up and call her blessed."

The training of children is an awesome responsibility, but one that our heavenly father has promised to help us complete, if we follow his direction. Unlike lower animals, the human child is in the care of his parents for a very long time. This prolonged growth period indicates something of the vast responsibility for their spiritual training. It hints too at the monumental task set for the mother. Let her embrace those qualities in 1 Tim 2:15 which

become the worthy woman whose children "rise up and call her blessed."
(Adapted from the book, *Far Above Rubies* by Mrs. Gene West)

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES WE NEED AS MOTHERS:

UNSELFISHNESS

- Put the children's needs above your own.
- "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (2 Cor. 12:14).

THE ABILITY TO RULE, GUIDE

- We must have knowledge and skill beforehand—before we have children. Time is critical.
- "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Tim. 5:14).

ABILITY TO TEACH THE CHILDREN

Among other things, mothers must teach their children the Bible concepts of respect; fear of God; self-control; modesty; humility, honesty and the ability to hold their tongues. How can we teach these things if we do not know them ourselves? Some women may be young in years, yet able to teach neonatology to other women. Can the same thing be said of women teaching scripture to others? Chronological age and number of years in the church is not necessarily the key. The number of years studying God's word is what makes a woman able to teach.

- "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:6).

ABILITY TO CHASTEN THE CHILDREN IN LOVE

How can we ask children to accept our chastening if we refuse to accept chastening from the Lord? "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Pro. 19:18).

At least two times David prayed to the Lord not to rebuke him when he was angry or frustrated with him. We need to remember this when we are chastening our own children. Children who have become habitual or unconscionable liars are often children who have been chastened too

harshly or too early. One very striking example is the twin boy from Russia who was adopted by Alaskan parents. His case gained world recognition because of a video a sibling made during one of the mother's disciplinary sessions for his lying.

- "O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure" (Psa. 6:1).
- "O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure" (Psa. 38:1).

We can teach our children to chasten themselves and thus win our favor, the same way Daniel won the favor of God.

- "Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words" (Dan. 10:12).

We must always remember that God rebukes and chastens us for our good, and that should be the goal of every mother with her children—not for her pleasure or vengeance.

- "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19).

QUALITIES OF A PEACEMAKER

Being a peacemaker in the family requires good judgment and wisdom. Where will you get it? Will you get this quality from God or the world?

- "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13).

WHAT WILL A PEACEMAKER DO?

- "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Psa. 34:14).
- "Happy is the man that **findeth wisdom**, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and **all her paths are peace**. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her" (Pro. 3:13-18).
- "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:21).
- "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9).

KINDNESS

- "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Col. 3:21).

HOW CAN WE TEACH AND EXEMPLIFY GOD'S LOVE IF WE HAVE NEVER LEARNED IT OURSELVES?

- "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children" (Titus 2:4).

DON'T TRY TO BE WONDERFUL ALL BY YOURSELF!

- "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. 6:3).
- "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive" (1 Cor. 4:7)?
- "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man" (Psa. 118:8).
- "...for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18).
- "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14-15).

Finally, we must all consider the possibility that God may never give us the opportunity to serve him in a marriage or in having children. It would be far better never to marry, than to marry a non-Christian and lose our own souls and the souls of our children in hell.

- For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25).
- For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" (Matt. 16:26)?

He may choose to make us wait for a long time for that job. That is no reflection on us! Sarah, Hannah, Anna and Elizabeth are all examples. We should be willing to grow in these qualities and trust God to do what is best for us. If we are pure in heart, God will count this to our credit, perhaps giving us more glory eternally than a mother of 12!

"For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she

which hath an husband" (Gal. 4:27).

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

1. A modern idea in religious thought is: "I will not influence my child, but let him choose for himself." What is the fallacy in this thinking?

Our lack of direction is in itself an influence against conviction. "Nature abhors a vacuum," is an old saying in physics. A vacuum is not to be found in the natural state of things on earth. Christ said, "You are either for me or against me." There is no neutral ground. Indifference is a shove in the wrong direction.

- Prov. 29:15 - A child left to himself brings his mother to shame.
- Prov. 13:24 - If you spare the rod you hate your son.
- Prov. 22:15 - Rod drives natural foolishness out. (It should not be just the rod, but the rod AND reproof).

2. Read the record of Moses' childhood in Exodus 1:8 through 2:10. Describe the conditions existing at his birth.

The Egyptians made the Israelite's life bitter with hard bondage; they instructed the midwives to kill the male children at birth.

3. What provisions did Jacobed make for Moses' physical well-being? Was this her only interest?

She hid him in a basket made of bullrushes. His physical well-being was not her only interest or she wouldn't have offered to nurse him for Pharaoh's daughter.

4. How did Moses come to reject his Egyptian citizenship? (Heb. 11:24-27 and Exodus 2:11-15)

We see it was by faith, faith in the teaching of his mother—Acts 7:23.

5. Did Moses's mother accept the view expressed in question 1? How do you know?

No. She was actively concerned about his spiritual welfare, and she worked against great odds to rear him. Women today have a similar plight when working against social pressures to rear their children. The opposition is not so apparent, and so some are not aware of it and thus lose their children's souls.

6. What other children did she influence? (Exod. 4:14-16; Exod. 15:20, 21) Describe their roles in the history of the Israelites.

Aaron was chosen by God to be a spokesman for Moses and Israel's first high priest; Miriam watched after Moses while he was in the bullrushes

and led all of the Israelite women in a song of deliverance from the Egyptians.

7. When did Hannah begin to plan for Samuel's upbringing? (1 Sam 1:11)
Before his birth, Hannah promised him to God. Luke 1:13-17 God prepared for John's life before his birth. We may assume that after a long life without a child, that Elizabeth also prepared herself to be a good mother.
8. How old was Josiah when he began to seek after God? (2 Chron. 34:1-3)
How old was Jesus when he expected his parents to understand that he must be "about his Father's business" (Luke 2:42-49)? What do these examples teach about the TIME of teaching children? Should we wait until they are older or begin immediately?
Josiah was sixteen according to this verse; Jesus was twelve. There is no proof that this was the TIME they STARTED training. We all know that if we wait until the teen years to begin training, our job is hopeless. There is grave danger in waiting to train a child, but the kind of teaching must be geared to the maturity of the child.
9. What godly woman instilled faith in her son even though her husband was an unbeliever? (Acts 16:1-2; 2 Tim. 1:5) Timothy's mother Eunice.
10. When did this training begin? (2 Tim. 3:15) from a child
11. What was included in his training? "...hast known the scriptures..."
12. What was the outcome of this training? (2 Tim. 1:5) The faith of his mother and grandmother was in him.
13. A young mother says, "My child doesn't LIKE church services, and I don't believe in forcing him to go." What does this indicate about the parents' view of religion?
She does not consider the training vital either for herself or her child. Part of God's admonition is not to forsake the assembly. (Eph. 6:4)
14. Does the child ALWAYS decide what he will do on the basis of whether he likes it? No, we know that he is not mature enough to be capable of some choices.
15. What are some areas where the child is NOT given a preference? School, foods, clothing, rest time, etc.
16. What can the parent do to change the child's attitude? Find out why a child dislikes going to Bible school or church. It could lead back to a bad attitude on the part of the parent or maybe even a Bible class teacher. The importance of the issue determines whether a child does will go or not. Change his attitude. Have a problem solving spirit.

17. What was Eli's mistake with the training of his sons? (1 Sam. 3:13)
He restrained them not. The word *restrained* includes physical force.
18. Why is it dangerous to rely too heavily on the church or the preacher to teach one's children?
Col. 3:20 children are commanded to obey PARENTS, not the preacher, etc. Training is the responsibility of the parents. Another "logical" argument is that the preacher has too little time for each child and there is usually a very erratic church program.
19. Sometimes zealous advocates of the Bible school will show how few prison inmates are from Bible schools and how many converts come from the Bible schools. What significant factor is overlooked?
The home has a far greater influence than any other institution. Children who attend Bible school are usually from families which are religiously oriented. What kind of parent takes his child to Bible study and church?
20. What was the Hebrew program for teaching their children (Deut. 6:7, 8; 11:19-20)?
Teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:
21. Show how Jezebel influenced her children and even her children's children (1 Kings 22:51-52; 2 Kings 8:18).
"And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, **and in the way of his mother...**" (1 Kings 22:52).
22. Ephesians 6:4 gives a very important principle in training children. Why is it important?
Provoke not your children to wrath. This is so important in teaching children attitudes. It is most difficult but most important. When our own wisdom runs out, our tempers usually take over. Remember, anger rests in the bosom of fools. Also remember that children can be foolish and prone to anger too.
23. What is on the tongue of the worthy woman (Pro. 31:26)?
24. According to 2 Corinthians 12:14, what does a worthy mother do for her children?
25. What is the woman's responsibility (1 Tim. 5:14)?

26. In the Old Testament, what did God require of parents concerning their children (Deut. 6:6)?
27. If the mother expects the children listen to her correction, what should she be willing to do when the one in authority corrects her (Pro. 19:18)?
28. What should the heart of the mother not be when she corrects her children (Psa. 6:1)?
29. What did it mean that Daniel chastened himself before the Lord (Dan. 10:12)?
30. What is the basis for rebuking and chastening in the Lord's eyes (Rev. 3:19)?
31. What is a major characteristic of God's children (Matt. 5:9)?
32. Why should we not provoke our children (Col. 3:21)?
33. How does God plan for women to learn to love their husbands and their children (Titus 2:4)?
34. Does God expect all women to know how to love their children without being taught (Titus 2:4)?
35. Who is the one responsible for making us what we are (1 Cor. 4:7)?
36. Where should our confidence be to make it possible for us to become what we should (1 John 5:14-15)?
37. Is it worth it to lock ourselves into an unscriptural marriage and lose our souls and the souls of our children in eternity (Matt. 16:26)?

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN MOTHER?

Lesson 11

If we see two women in a department store, each with a child or two, should we be able to tell which mother is a Christian and which is non-Christian? Are there external evidences (things we can see) as well as those qualities in their minds and hearts that make them behave a certain way?

Spiritually, you cannot prepare too much to have a child. Spend the weeks studying, praying, and seeking God, doing good works, etc.! That thought is underpinned with the idea that if you think you know anything, you know nothing yet as you ought to know (1 Cor. 8:2). I am finding myself daily wishing I had studied harder and with more earnestness when I was young, before I ever became a wife or a mother. Why? After the children were born, every bit of knowledge, understanding and wisdom that I had was stretched and used to its fullest, and I was left wishing I had more. In the thick of motherhood moments to study and gain the strength you wish you had are so much harder to come by, since free time is virtually non-existent.

There are many challenges to motherhood. Of course, we feel foolishly over confident to tackle most of them beforehand. When we are actually faced with those same apparently easy issues, we are surprised when they stump us. Then we don't always respond well to them and can do damage to ourselves and certainly put our children at a disadvantage. All this is not to mention the impact of our bad example being unimaginably far-reaching. Any possible spiritual growth that we can accomplish ahead of time can only help. As we encounter situations such as challenges with our own siblings, with church members, or even people of the world, meeting each with the understanding that overcoming temptations, not falling to them, is what strengthens us, can provide a new source of motivation for redoubled efforts on our part to be the kind of Christian that will excel. We are after a change in HEART for the Lord, which will entirely transform our motherhood for the better.

The whole key is our **mind** as a Christian and that our perspective of motherhood is that motherhood is a Christian endeavor, something we're doing as a steward of God, bought with a price, and we are not our own. How strong is our will and determination to forsake all for Christ? How wholehearted am I really? With that sober-mindedness underpinning our motherhood, we will approach everything differently than we would if we are in it for ourselves. For example, as we try to guide the house, our primary (most vital) task is to guide the children spiritually, to train them in the things that are important spiritually (Gal. 6:8). "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.:16 Woe

unto you, ye blind guides,...” (Matt. 23:15-16). “Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also” (Matt. 23:24-26). As we rule our children, we'd must keep in mind that we should rule with diligence (Rom. 12:8), kindness and wisdom, etc. “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven” (Col. 4:1). So many other things could be cross-referenced here, but the idea would be that a Christian mother is truly a Christian in every respect. And what exactly is a Christian? We have plenty to study on that topic, enough that there would be no need to overlap anything.

Most young girls think that when they get married, they will automatically make good wives and mothers. After all, they will be in love with the one they marry and so they will never fuss or fight with them, and the babies will all be good and never cry or be sick. What young girls do not realize is that what they are right now is what they will be as a wife and mother. The habits they have now, the character traits they possess will be what they carry with them through life and into eternity—unless they make a conscious effort to change. Are teens and young girls part of who the apostle Paul was talking about when he told Titus that the older women should teach the younger? He obviously was not talking just about young married women. He must have included those young girls who also plan to marry and bear children.

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10). **Notice that Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord,** and so became one of the chief tools in the Lord’s hands to accomplish His will in the return of the captives of Israel. What if a young girl actively *prepared* her heart for the day she hopes to have children? Might she do a better job of this great work? What about the women who already have children, can they study and grow to do a better job?

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words” (Dan. 10:12). **Daniel set his heart to understand and to chasten himself before God and his words were heard.** Do Christian mothers need to be heard by God as they deal with their children and try to teach them His love?

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their

children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:3-5).

The two major words used in this passage (translated **love** in the English) are defined below.

- NT:5362 **philandros** (fil'-an-dros); from NT:5384 and NT:435; fond of man, i.e. affectionate as a wife: KJV - love their husbands.
- NT: 5388 **philoteknos** (fil-ot'-ek-nos); from NT: 5384 and NT: 5043; fond of one's children, i.e. maternal: KJV - love their children.

In these two definitions, you can see the relationship to the main word **phileo** which is a friendship love.

There are different words for love, but the passage in Titus 3:4 uses the same root for both love their husbands, love their children. But after that the kindness and **love** of God our Saviour toward man appeared (Titus 3:4), (same root word as love husbands, love children). 5363. philanthropia, fil-anthro-pee'-ah; from the same as G5364; fondness of mankind Philanthropia: means be fond of, (friend **to** (**not of**) them). If loving our children (being fond of them, a friend **TO** them—in the WAY God wants us to) were something that just came naturally, He wouldn't command that we be taught. We should seek our Creator's wisdom in this great work and not rely on our own or another man's wisdom.

Notice the very telling passages from the Psalms which describes how true friends behave toward each other:

- "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother" (Psa. 35:13-14).
- "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17).
- "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).

We know that true friendship is one of the best things in the world. What if our children can count on having a mother who is a true friend? What do true friends do for each other?

- "**Faithful are the wounds of a friend**; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:6).

- **“Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.** 10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not...” (Prov. 27:9-10).
- **“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend”** (Prov. 27:17).

If the children are still at home, that is the mother's work; however, we have a different situation today than they had during the time of Titus. What happens nowadays when the children become kindergarten age? The world takes them away from us! Previously mothers had twenty four hours a day, seven days a week with the children until they were grown. Now how many hours do they have? We have at least eight hours less. Also the children have school programs or projects to do at home—which means mothers have even less time with them. Yet young mothers still have a responsibility to teach their children. They must love their children and teaching them is showing love. Should mothers teach less or as much? Mothers need to teach everything! What is the mother's job when the children get home from school every day? Children always seem to have homework to do. Then what happens to the Bible teaching time? Both the church and the parents have serious competition for the souls of children today. Under the guise of education, the humanists are claiming soul after soul. If we are to keep the children's hearts, we have to teach them about God and His ways. **We need to win their hearts for God before they go to school.**

This trust might be compared to Hannah's job with young Samuel before she had to give him over to Eli and the service of the temple. The whole nation of Israel knew that Eli had not trained his own children well, and Hannah might have been tempted to forsake her vow because Eli was not a strong influence for the Lord. But she trusted the promises of God and gave her best to Samuel's training while she had him at home. We must fight for our children's souls. If a mother really loves her child, what will she do? Making sure she has time at home with the children to teach them every day will be her top priority. The mother's time belongs to her children. Today there is a battle for our children's hearts and souls, but many are blind to the fight. If we are blind to the fight, who will win? We must actively teach the truths in God's word as well as teach by a godly example.

We must show mercy in teaching and training our children. In addition to providing physically for those who depend on us, we must also be concerned with their training, even sometimes through affliction—maybe theirs and ours! We must teach skills, chores (all part of diligence), but especially Bible study, whether or not they want it! **It's not merciful to neglect them just because they're disinterested little hyperactive page turners who rebel by sighing and rolling their eyes.** Sometimes we need the “forehead of flint” to be willing to “butt heads” with our children because we love them

enough to do it. **Eli lived to regret his permissiveness.** God shows His love for us by carefully providing His words for us, training us, nurturing us. "The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word: It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psa. 119:64, 67, 71). It is merciful to our child to reward according to their works, whether punishments or rewards. It is by God's mercy that He rewards us according to our works. "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work" (Psa. 62:12). **Which is more merciful, to withhold punishment from our child and let him go to hell, or inflict hardship now and save his soul?**

- "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. 23:13-14).
- "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Prov. 3:11-12).
- "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord ***loveth*** he **chasteneth**, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:4-6). The Greek meaning is: **(3809. paideia, pahee-di'-ah; from G3811; tutorage; i.e. education or training; by implication disciplinary correction)**. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us ***after their own pleasure; but he for our profit***, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed" (Heb. 12:7-13).
- "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. 19:18).

Consistent punishments are necessary, but so are rewards and motivations. Do we place equal emphasis on being faithful to reward our

children for doing right, to show our appreciation for the good they do and rejoice at a job well done? The Lord wants us to succeed, and uses His praise and promise of certain rewards for our motivation. "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. 10:41-42).

Like God, we should do everything we can to help our children to succeed—by doing our utmost to bring out the best in them, not discouraging them. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Do my words always show mercy, and build others up, or do they sometimes tear down or bring out the worst in others? "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness (#2616 mercy)" (Prov. 31:26). "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, (building up) that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29).

Sometimes, out of mercy, we just have to find a way to MAKE children do right: The Lord's care of Lot is one example: "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city" (Gen. 19:16). Even in our punishments, we must show mercy. **Does our punishment match the level of our exasperation, or the degree of the children's bad behavior?** The Lord knows it is human nature to punish our children to please ourselves, and not always in a way that will profit our children. When they fail to do something right and we are embarrassed, should we hit them on the head and call them a fool? Should we pinch them in some soft spot and twist the skin until it bleeds? When we want to let them know they are not pleasing to us, should our face show anger, hatred or meanness? "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:9-10). "He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD **pitieth** them that fear him" (Psa. 103:9-17). (pity: same word as used for mercy in other passages - #7355. racham, raw-kham'; a prim. root; to fondle; by impl. to love, especially to be compassionate, closely related to the word for a mother cherishing & nourishing the baby in

her womb). When our children are genuinely remorseful, or trying to please us, do we have enough discretion to go lightly on their punishment at those times? “For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 2:13). The Greek definition is: (#2920. krisis, decision, (for or against); by extension a tribunal; by implication justice). In other words, this is what you deserve, but this (lesser punishment) is what you get. How do we want to be treated? Do we treat our children that way? Consider David’s reaction to those who should have been punished (Shimei, Absalom, Joab, even Amnon). Was David merely without strength of character, or was he showing God’s mercy, by giving those people ample time to repent?

WE MUST LOVE OUR CHILDREN THE 1 CORINTHIANS 13 WAY.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: (1 Cor. 13:4-8). We all have room to grow in our love for our children.

CHARITY (LOVE) SUFFERS LONG AND IS KIND: Suffers long: #3114. makrothumeo, mak-roth-oo-meh'-o; from the same as G3116; to be long-spirited, i.e. (obj.) forbearing or (subj.) patient. “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Cor. 13:11). . **Anyone familiar with children knows there is a whole lot in a child to “suffer long” with.** We need to remind ourselves daily that they are still children and be patient with the weaknesses and faults that are part of their immaturity. This does not mean to ignore a fault in a child as “just a stage that will pass,” but in our own hearts as we work with them, we should not be discouraged or angry when they behave like a child and must be taught better.

One of the things we know about a child is that foolishness is bound up in his heart. He needs the **rod and reproof**, applied in **kindness** (rather than the nastiest look I can muster while I scold). “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 **And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil**, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Tim 2:24-26).

- rod: 7626. shebet, shay'-bet; from an unused root prob. mean. to branch off, a scion, i.e. (lit.) a stick (for punishing, writing, fighting, ruling, walking, etc.) or (fig.) a clan
- correction: (a whole topic in itself)

- 8104. shamar, shaw-mar'; a prim. root; prop. to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. *guard*; gen. to protect, attend to, etc

Do we get the idea from this word that if the child is foolish (and we're doing our job right), he is inevitably going to feel a prick that will guard him, keep him and protect him from the foolishness? How consistent is a hedge of thorns? Is this meanness, or actually kindness? How consistent should we be in our discipline?

- "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: **For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth**" (Prov. 3:11-12).
- "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord **loveth** he chasteneth, and **scourgeth** every son whom he receiveth. (#3809. paideia, pahee-di'-ah; from G3811; tutorage; i.e. education or training; by implication disciplinary correction) 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us *after their own pleasure*; **but he for our profit**, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, **lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed**" (Heb. 12:4-13).
- "Chasten thy son **while there is hope**, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. 19:18).

First, a physical rod MUST do the keeping. Next, as the child begins to become wiser, the verbal instruction of wisdom can increasingly become the rod to do the keeping.

- A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool (Prov. 17:10).

Love is kind. NT:5541 xrhsteu=omai chresteuomai (khraste-yoo'-om-ahee); middle voice from NT:5543; to show oneself useful, i.e. act benevolently: KJV - be kind.

- Read all of **Psalms 107** to begin to understand the loving kindness of God and how we should be longsuffering and kind to our children.
- “And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, **and of great kindness**, and forsookest them not” (Neh. 9:17).
- “She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the **law of kindness**” (Prov. 31:26).
- “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for **he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil**” (Luke 6:35).
- “And be ye **kind one to another**, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32).
- “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, **kindness**, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col. 3:12-13).

This scripture may be a key in giving us understanding about **how** we can be longsuffering and kind. It shows how our longsuffering and kindness fits with the need for our own humility in dealing with our children! Do we need Christ's forgiveness? Have we ever done wrong? Are we really so much better than our children? Does this give us reason to be longsuffering and kind to them?

- “And to godliness brotherly **kindness**; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pet. 1:7).

Love envieth not: #2206. zeloo, dzay-lo'-o; from G2205; to have warmth of feeling for or against. Below are some scriptures where 2206 **zeloo** is used to give us an idea of what it means. This word can mean actual envy, but may also just denote strength of feeling for or against something.

- “And the patriarchs, moved with **envy**, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him” (Acts 7:9).
- “But it is good to be **zealously affected** always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you” (Gal. 4:18).
- “But **covet earnestly** the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way” (1 Cor. 12:31).

Do we find ourselves having a warm feeling against our child? This is **not** love! If we find ourselves with that feeling, we need to pray about it. Can we help our child optimally if this is in our heart? This feeling may come because we have been continually wronged or mistreated by the child, or because we are seeing qualities in them that are distasteful. We need to do everything in our power to guard against this feeling against them.

Love vaunteth not itself: 4068. *perpereuomai*, per-per-yoo'-om-ahee; mid. from *perperos*, (braggart; perh. by redupl. of the base of G4008); to boast:--vaunt itself. Do we constantly compare our children unfavorably with ourselves or others, or do we think we are so great and our kids are worthless? The apostles wanted to shove the little children away thinking their own work was so much more important, but found themselves corrected by Christ (Mark 10:13-15). We need to be careful not to value ourselves and disdain our children. The Lord might have another opinion entirely. Remember: the apple does not fall far from the tree.

Love is not puffed up: #5448. *phusioo*, foo-see-o'-o; from G5449 in the prim. sense of blowing; to inflate, i.e. (fig.) make proud (haughty). **"Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished"** (Eccl. 4:13). We need to be humble with our children and be willing to be admonished and entreated by them. "He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (Prov. 14:21). Do we sometimes despise our children?

We must realize our children's training is the most important part of our day and not shove them off in some corner or send them to play at a neighbor's house while we work. What will be my punishment in eternity if I neglect my child's teaching and his soul is lost? **"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame"** (Prov. 29:15). Also, we should not focus on one child and neglect another. There is a very real problem in many children today; it is called **neglect retardation**. Balance may be difficult to achieve at times—especially if we have one very intelligent child with whom we identify. Prayer for fairness and lack of prejudice is needed. Much thought and study is also needed. **"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works"** (Heb. 10:24). Practically speaking, can I regularly make a list of strengths, weaknesses or needs my child has and also list goals for each child to reach toward? This might eliminate some children from "falling through the cracks" and show us if we're focusing on one child and neglecting the others. If we are not puffed up, the opposite is humility, which serves the other person and considers the other better than ourselves.

Love does not behave itself unseemly: NT:808 *aschemosune* (as-kay-mos-oo'-nay); from NT:809; an **indecentcy**; by implication, the pudenda: KJV - **shame**, that which is unseemly. NT:809 *askemon* (as-kay'-mone); from

NT:1 (as a negative particle) and a presumed derivative of NT:2192 (in the sense of its congener NT:4976); properly, shapeless, i.e. (figuratively) **inelegant**: KJV - uncomely.

Another scripture where the word unseemly is used is: "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is **unseemly**, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (Rom. 1:27). We must think about teaching appropriateness, suitable behavior, decency, modesty, and practice these things ourselves, not only in front of our children but also when we *think* they're not looking. Is it rational that we buy them unseemly, immodest underwear and nightwear and expect them not to want to wear the same skimpy clothing in public? If children are allowed to parade naked in front of us or each other, how can they be protected from incestuous behavior? Our example matters! Are we careful to consider what is beautiful to all men without being concerned for their praise?

Seeketh not her own: Mothers, of all people, are called upon to practice unselfishness. This not only fulfills our children's needs at the time, but will teach them unselfishness through example (mostly a work in progress). As a mother who is learning more unselfishness, we may find this to be one of the greatest benefits of motherhood. Also it can be one of the most despised and discarded of character traits if we are not careful. We must give up our own pleasure and often our own needs in order to provide for and nurture our children. We don't need to feel "put upon" to have to spend time with our children, or always looking for ways to take a break. **Let me step on toes here:** Why do you suppose *Mother's Morning Out* is being implemented in many congregations? What about mothers who seek frequent babysitting or daycare? Does true love say, "I love you honey, but I can't stand your company. I need a break from you?"

Children were not born to be convenient. They were born to be loved and trained. We can either shun this opportunity for our own spiritual growth or embrace it. **Of course, this does not imply that asking for help when we need it is timid, cowardly or feeble.** We can and must work on our tolerance level, but **if we need an occasional helping hand, taking a break can help us do a better job later on.** Even bird pairs share the care and feeding of little birds until they have flown. The idea or the motivation behind the break is the key, and our goal should be to *increase* our tolerance and strength to where we need relief less and less often.

Is not easily provoked: #3947. paroxuno, par-ox-oo'-no; from G3844 and a der. of G3691; to sharpen alongside, i.e. (fig.) to exasperate:--easily provoke, stir. **OUCH!** Do we **become exasperated more quickly with our children** than with anyone else? Is this love? Sometimes our tendency to become angry or frustrated with our children comes from a lack of wisdom. Anger rests in the bosom of

fools (Eccl. 7:9). Understanding our children helps us to be slower to anger, and so does remembering our own weaknesses. We should do our best to think of a scripture that applies to the situation and that should give us the ammunition we need to overcome anger. **“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health”** (Prov. 12:18). **How** do we speak to our children when we correct them?

Thinketh no evil: #3049. logizomai, log-id'-zom-ahee; mid. from G3056; **to take an inventory**, i.e. estimate (lit. or fig.) (translated in other places counted, impute, reckon, account,) Evil: 2556. kakos, kak-os'; appar. a prim. word; worthless (intrinsically such; whereas G4190 prop. refers to effects), i.e. (subj.) depraved, or (obj.) injurious.

- “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think** (#3049 logizomai) on these things” (Phil 4:8). This is **not** talking about rainbows, kittens, and puppies! This is talking about spiritually good things.
- “But **those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart (the thinker)**; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man” (Matt. 15:18-20).
- “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29).

Do we encourage our children to think about good things, building them up, or is our conversation a discouragement, or something that tears them down? We not only need to consider what is right for ourselves, but we also must consider how their minds and consciences might be affected as well. What kinds of things do we discuss with our children?

- “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may **edify** another” (Rom. 14:19).
- “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things **edify** not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth” (1 Cor. 10:23-24).

It is not just what we say or think about. The definition of this word “thinketh” implies more. Do I think (take an inventory, count, evil or have injurious thoughts) toward my child? Do I want to hurt him because he makes me angry? Do I assume the worst about him or do I hope for the best? **A small child who is continually told he’s bad may feel obligated to be bad.** In contrast, if someone thinks (expects) the best of us, aren’t we more prone to try not to disappoint them? This is a very subtle but powerful

emotion. However, it can't be faked. If we think the worst of our child, they will know it, no matter how many flattering things we say later. We must learn to look for positive qualities in our child, and appreciate him despite his faults. **(Not to be confused with refusing to believe anything negative about them that someone might point out!)** We need to value our children in spite of their faults, just as we value ourselves. **But in order to encourage growth, we need to acknowledge the child's faults too and work on them.** How can we help them grow and mature if we do not think they ever do anything wrong? Kids pick up on that mindset at an early age and figure they can get away with anything just because "Mother will never believe" they did wrong.

Rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth: If we knew there were a food that would certainly cause cancer, and another one that would prevent it entirely, don't you think we would cultivate a distaste for the troublesome one and try to acquire a taste for the curative? **We need to hate evil and love righteousness and truth, and cultivate these qualities in our children as well!** First of all, we need to know the difference between good and evil before we can acquire a love for the good. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). We need to have **pleasure** in the Lord's ways and be vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked every day (2 Pet. 2:7) instead of allowing our children access to "borderline" books and entertainments or even vanity (spiritual junk food). Remember what is said of the widow who loves this world "She that loveth pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6). Should we try to give our children as much pleasure as possible and then expect them to turn away from all that as they get older? We must teach them to rejoice in the truth. We must rejoice in it ourselves, more than our necessary food **"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"** (Job 23:12). We can only do this by constant study.

Bears all things: #4722. stego, steg'-o; from G4721; **to roof over**, i.e. (fig.) to cover with silence (endure patiently). Some unthinking mothers expose their children's faults to others so they will have sympathy. Why would they do that? Are these mothers seeking godly counsel or are they just enjoying the pity they get from outsiders? Maybe they are just looking for something to talk about. Is this how we like to be treated? On the other hand, some mothers can't accept someone's telling them about a fault their child has. We don't need to



ruminate over all their weaknesses with every one of our buddies, but neither do we need to ignore genuine problems. We need to learn the meekness to endure some of their problems in silence. **This word *bear* also indicates “to roof over” as in protect. We must protect the children from wolves and the evil influences.**

Believes all things: #4100. pisteuo, pist-yoo'-o; from G4102; to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), i.e. credit; by impl. to entrust (espec. one's spiritual well-being to Christ):--believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with. **Does this mean we have to believe everything our child tells us?** No, the faith we need to have is in God's promises. What promises has He given us in regard to our children?

- “**Train** (not beat) up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).
- “The **rod and reproof** give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Prov. 29:15).
- “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (Prov. 19:18).

Hannah believed God would reward her for keeping her vow (1 Sam. 1:11, 26-28). Jacobed believed God enough to fear Him above Pharaoh and do whatever it took to save Moses (Exod. 1:16, 22; 2:3). But this is not the only way that believing all things is loving our children. **We need to instill a faith in our children in ALL of God's promises so that it becomes a living faith that causes us and them to work.** When a situation arises, use the Word to answer questions, reassure, reprove, etc.

Hopes all things: We are saved by hope (Rom. 8:24). Do we have hope for our children? Can we pray for this and get renewed energy to work with them and to run with patience our own race? Then following our example will strengthen them to do the same. Do we want to be a Hannah, Lois or Eunice? Did they have their hope in the temporary or the eternal things? Do we often encourage our children to think about physical, temporary things instead of eternal things? (For example: Is our encouragement toward a certain career—lawyer vs. preacher?) Our eternal hope needs to be what drives our every action. Our children's spiritual lives may depend on our communicating that to them.

We think with our kids we can have the best of both worlds: that they can be super stars, career climbers, sports champs, and also good Christians, but where we place our focus will be what they are most encouraged to do. What will a man give in exchange for his own soul? **What will a mother give in exchange for her child's soul?** If we focus on school, the school will be child's number one priority. If we focus on Bible (not just nominally, but **really**) then the Lord will be the child's number one priority. If you had a

choice, for your child to actually be able to become a millionaire or to be a preacher, which would you choose? God values the preacher! His only Son was a preacher. Daughters need to prepare themselves to be wives of preachers, elders or deacons.

- “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Cor. 14:12).

Surely we should convey the value of preaching and teaching to our children, and train or prepare them for this most important work.

Endures all things: #5278. hupomeno, hoop-om-en'-o; from G5259 and G3306; to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; fig. to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere. Do we find ourselves despairing with our children, wondering “what’s the use?” We need to stay behind (**stay under**) them. We need to **remain** constant in our work with them, bearing trials with fortitude instead of complaining, fear and despair. Will we be among the parents who “divorce” our kids and turn them out in the streets because they are inconvenient or because they shame us?

Love never fails: #1601. ekpipto, ek-pip'-to; from G1537 and G4098; to drop away; spec. be driven out of one's course; fig. to lose, become inefficient. Can we be tempted to drop away or be driven off course in regards to our love for our child, or our love for the Lord? Our hope and faith need to keep us constant. **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”** (1 Cor. 15:58). We have great challenges in loving our children the way God desires.

As we have seen in our study so far, parents (particularly mothers) are to be true friends to their children by teaching and training them to love God and His ways. They are to teach them everything pertaining to life and godliness. Mothers have the opportunity to use the 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 love to train and teach their children and thus themselves. They also have an obligation to practice mercy as they correct and punish the children for their errors. **We may not be able to take anything but the souls of our children to heaven with us; however, that prize will be the greatest we possess.**

This week there are no questions, mainly because the lesson is already very long; however, if you want to ask questions, please feel free to do so.

KEEPER-AT-HOME

Lesson 12

Suggested roles and responsibilities of young girls include becoming a good wife and mother, being a **keeper-at-home** (guiding the house, lodging strangers, being hospitable) and being a servant in the church (children's Bible class teacher, teacher of women, wife of a deacon or elder who serves the needs of others).

First, let us define a *keeper-at-home*. The woman is a help meet for man (Gen. 2:18). One way she can be a help meet to her husband is to guide the house (1 Tim. 5:14). This literally means to be a house despot. The dictionary definition for the word *despot* says: a ruler with absolute power and authority. We are to be a keeper-at-home, which literally means to be a house guard, or to watch over the home (Titus 2:5). Under our husband's authority, we are to be guiding, guarding, and taking care of the entire situation at home. What are some specific ways we can **prepare ourselves for the job of working in the home**?

CHOOSING OUR FRIENDS

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Pro. 13:20). Most of us would like to believe that we are strong, and an exception to the rule, but instead of being confident in our own abilities, let us trust what the Lord has said about the matter and be extremely careful which companions we choose. We need companions that will encourage us to prepare to be good keepers-at-home even before we have that responsibility, and ones who also continue to encourage us when we are married to be a good keeper-at-home. "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge" (Pro. 14:7). As soon as we realize that someone is foolish we should flee! Instead of having foolish friends, pay particular attention to the kinds of friends David had. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psa. 119:63).

Our friends should be strong Christians in the church, not the people of the world. Some rationalize that they are friends with worldly people to try to help bring them to Christ. This is a big mistake. Jesus called sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32), and was willing to eat with them, but he did not participate in all the things they did, nor did he spend all his time with them. If we find ourselves "hanging out" with those who are not Christians and enjoying their company, something is seriously wrong with our thinking. "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14).

There are times when everyone needs to go to school or work, but Christians must not be like the people they are around or participate in their vanities. Christ warned that some people are going to hate us, because we testify that their deeds are evil (John 7:7). If we fit right in with them, then something is seriously wrong. Instead, we are supposed to be a "peculiar people" (1 Pet. 2:9). The world will think it is strange that we do not do the things they do (1 Pet. 4:3-4). We will seem a bit odd to our peers. They should be able to tell a difference between us and everyone else.

CHOOSING A MATE OR HAVING A MATE CHOSEN FOR US

Probably one of the biggest decisions in our lives that will affect our spiritual well-being is who we marry. We can either have a spouse who is a good influence or a bad one. We can either become like Christ with our spouse's help, or in spite of him. "And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:25).

We must never "play with fire" by considering anyone who is not already a Christian. We must not deceive ourselves; evil communication does corrupt good manners (1 Cor. 15:33), and if we marry someone who is not a Christian, we will not have the encouragement we need to serve the Lord by being a keeper-at-home. Even some who have grown up in the church may have a seriously wrong attitude about the wife's work at home.

CHOOSING AN EDUCATION

We need to have our priorities straight when it comes to deciding what education we are going to seek. Luke 8:14 warns us not to be choked with the cares of this life. If we decide to go to college, we need to make sure we do not choose a school that is so expensive that we are left with heavy debts which we have to pay off after we are married. Not all parents can afford to send their children to school and young people are increasingly left to pay for their own education. If we put ourselves hopelessly in debt and have to work to pay off those debts, then that could prevent us from being able to obey God by being a keeper-at-home. Being a keeper-at-home does not mean that you can never help out the family finances, but the advisable way to do that is to find employment which would allow you to be a keeper-at-home at the same time. The husband's main job is to be the breadwinner, but that does not mean that he should not "honor the wife as the weaker vessel," especially if the wife is sick or needs some relief. With all that in mind, we need to realize that our **God given job as a woman is to guard and keep the home**, just as the husband's job is to provide for the family.

CHOOSING A JOB

Young **unmarried women** need to be careful about the decisions they make about working. If it is an absolute necessity that they work, they need to make sure that the job they choose is one they would not mind being found

doing when Christ returns. For instance, a young unmarried woman should not choose to sign a contract that would lock her into working for a certain number of years—preventing her from fulfilling her job as a home maker after marriage. A Christian wife’s “career” should be based in her home and her family, but if she works for wages, she needs to make sure that she chooses a job which would not prevent her from being a keeper (**guard**) at home. As you go through this lesson and see what all is involved with being a keeper-at-home, you will wonder how any woman can hold a job outside the home.

HABITS REVEAL WHAT IS IN OUR HEART

To prepare ourselves to be good keepers-at-home, we must establish good habits. Habits are recurrent, often unconscious patterns of behavior that are acquired through frequent repeated actions. Habits are our deeds, and they show what is in our hearts, so really the point here is that we need to have our hearts formed to be good home-keepers. The habits that we establish now are those which we will continue even into marriage. We need to examine our habits very carefully.

THE HABIT OF BEING A SERVANT

One of the best habits we can cultivate is the habit of being a servant. “But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).

Being a keeper-at-home means being the servant to the whole household. That is not always easy, and certainly is not something that is cultivated in one night. “Daughter-hood” is the training ground for being a wife. If you are a willing servant now when your parents ask you to do something, then you will be a willing servant when you are married. In marriage, you hurt more than just yourself if you are lazy. For instance, married women need to maintain a home that will enable the family to be hospitable. Some husbands, wives and children are unable to invite others to their homes without advance warning because it is generally so messy. If, while you are a daughter, your room is a wreck all the time that is probably what your house is going to look like when you are married. Cleaning your room is not the only way you can serve. It includes being willing to extend beyond yourself and help others out with their tasks. We should not the type to pretend we do not see that mess on the floor, hoping someone else will see it and clean it up. We need to be the first to volunteer whenever anything needs to be done, even if it is in no way our responsibility. If young ladies cultivate a love for serving now, then they will almost surely carry that attitude

into marriage. And mothers, do not think you have to do all this by yourselves if you understand that sons and daughters need to be trained.

“Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:2-8).

We need to be servants like Christ was. Would we be selfish if we always esteemed others better than ourselves? What wonderful servants we would be if we looked on the things of others instead of our own things. Let us look at the example of the virtuous woman and notice how busy she was.

“She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household and a **portion to her maidens**. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness” (Pro. 31:13-27).

Consider how much this woman was serving! Look at how many things she was involved with! She truly led a busy, productive, life. It seems like she had ceaseless energy and devotion to her job, and we need to be that way also. However, consider also that she had maidens and children to help her—already well-trained to serve, never allowing for slackness. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season **we shall reap, if we faint not**” (Gal. 6:9).

THE HABIT OF BEING ORGANIZED

We *make* time for those things that are important to us. There really should not be a situation where we do not have time to do something. For example, if we do not straighten up our rooms or go visit the old folk's

home, it is not really because we do not have the time. It is because other things in our life were more important to us. Sometimes we can find things that we could have given up if we had budgeted our time wisely. It would behoove all of us to do a better job budgeting our time. It may not seem very important for those of us who have more free time than others, but if women get in the habit of planning their time better, the habit of planning will serve them well in years to come when their lives are busier.

- We are to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). Time is precious, and we need to redeem it instead of wasting it.
- "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Pro. 6:6-8)

With a little preparation we can accomplish much. If we can plan things in advance, we will not find ourselves saying "I did not have time" or "I forgot." If our home is neat and organized, we will not have to spend so much time looking for things that have been misplaced. The old saying, "A place for everything, and everything in its place" might not be such a bad idea. Sometimes we are working hard, but we get so obsessed with one task that we neglect some others that really need to be done too. We need to be able and willing to do **what** we need to do **when** we need to do it. For instance, we might work so hard preparing a Bible lesson that we neglect to give our kids lunch! Or maybe we are doing such a bang-up job redecorating that the dishes pile up in the sink and we are embarrassed when company drops by. That is the time our trained daughters (and sons) should take up the slack.

We all know the story about Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Martha apparently was a very good keeper-at-home, but unfortunately there was a bit of *overkill* involved. The scriptures say that she was **cumbered** or weighted down with her serving. She was cooking during a Bible study when she should have been in there with Jesus listening to His words. She had her priorities wrong. That is not to say that housework is unimportant and can be neglected, but God and His word should always be our first priority. Most of the time we can **plan** our lives so that we are able to accomplish our domestic tasks as well as study God's word, but if there ever is a choice, we must be like Mary and choose the **better** part. We might have to do like the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31, and get up before dawn, and give a portion to our "maidens" to accomplish everything we have to get done. With careful planning there is almost no room for excuses. There is almost always a way to do everything we should.

THE HABIT OF BEING FAITHFUL

Part of being like the virtuous woman is faithfulness and diligence in household matters. This woman's behavior is a great honor to her husband.

He can safely trust in her and he does not have to worry about how she is going to handle the household because she is hardworking, faithful, diligent and competent. We need to be faithful like this woman. What are we like now? If we say we are going to do something, can others trust that we will do what we said we would? Are we dependable? If we are supposed to be somewhere at a certain time are we always late, or can others trust that we will be there when we said we would? "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). We need to practice being faithful even in mundane things so that when something that really matters comes up we will be faithful in that also.

BEING CAREFUL WITH OUR MONEY

We can see that the virtuous woman is very careful with her money. She considers a field and buys it. Are we circumspect with our money? Even if we are not married and can spend all our money on ourselves, is it wise to get in the habit of buying the nicest clothes or whatever is our heart's desire?

"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil. 4:10-12).

Are we content with what we have, or are we always thinking about what we are going to buy next?

"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. **And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.** But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:7-12).

We need to be happy with what we have already, and learn to covet spiritual wealth instead of material. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that

they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19). This scripture will serve us well, because the desire for **things** can cause many problems in a marriage. "Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife" (Pro. 17:1). "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live" (Pro. 15:27). **When helping the poor, also consider these scriptures in relation to their "needs."**

We need to examine ourselves very carefully to make sure we are not spending so much money that we trouble our house. If both spouses must work long hours to maintain their spending habits, it may be time to reassess and cut back. It is far better to have rested, relaxed parents who are able to spend time with the family instead of ones who are always working—pushing themselves to the max so that they can pay bills. We really need to train ourselves to be careful with our money so we can be good keepers-at-home.

BEING CAREFUL WITH OUR TIME

There is no doubt that we need to train ourselves to be careful with our time. How do we spend our time? Do we waste it with visiting and gossiping from house to house? Particularly younger girls are tempted to waste time primping—trying to make themselves look good. Should we waste precious time tending to our physical bodies? Should we be seeking the praise of men? "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain" (Pro. 31:30). We should rather devote our time to more profitable things. Consider the need to rest at times.

"And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:31-34).

Here we can see that Jesus was so busy working that he did not even have a chance to eat. He reached the point where he was so exhausted that he had to find a place to rest. It is true that we all need rest sometimes, but we can find far better ways of resting than we typically choose. There are many things we can find to do that are relaxing, restful and still worthwhile! Be on the lookout for things you can do that are also valuable. Do not feel that you have to reward yourself at the end of a hard day by sitting down in front of the television or the computer for an hour or more of mindless

entertainment. If you need to, keep a journal of your "down time" and record what you do and for how long. Then find ways to gradually wean yourself of some bad habits, and replace them with tasks that you enjoy which are good. Dead works are not the only things you can do that will give you pleasure. God has commanded us to enjoy the **good** in our labor (Eccl. 3:13), and most of the time even the things we originally dread doing give us a great sense of satisfaction when we are actually working at them, or when we are finished. We can certainly get great enjoyment even in labor.

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Pet. 4:2). If we give up the rest of our money, then we have nothing left. If we give up the rest of our time to do the will of God, then how much is left? It is the will of God for us to eat and sleep to live. Remember, every second that you spend on yourself is gone forever. Think of all the riches that you will be missing in heaven by fooling yourself into thinking that you just **have** to have so much time for yourself!! Sometimes we tend to pamper ourselves and we do not give ourselves credit for what we are really capable of doing or becoming. Instead, we need to be our own best critics and, as painful as it might be, examine everything we do to make sure that we are doing the best possible. When we see a problem, we need to return to it again and again in our minds. It is far more comfortable to turn away from the mirror and forget what we really look like (James 1:23-25), but we need to scrutinize our faults, not ignore them. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but we need to be different. If someone is critical of us, we need not automatically assume we are right, but be able to accept a wise rebuke. Only someone with a humble spirit who is able to see her own faults will be able to change herself for the better. The proud person automatically thinks he is fine just like he is. "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility" (Pro. 15:31-33).

The bottom line for all of us is not to be content with ourselves as we are. Let us closely examine ourselves so that we can grow to be better servants **now**, and not waste precious time that God has given us. Time is a gift from God, a "talent" so to speak. Let us read together, carefully and slowly, **Matthew 25:14-46**.

Let us not hide our talents in the dirt, hoping to be able to use them someday in the future. We must do everything we can **now** to use what the Lord has given us. We need to be **afraid to slack** if the Lord has given us much, because that is more that we will be responsible for. Especially those of us who have been brought up in Christian homes and taught the truth all our lives should fear, because we have the great blessing of a head start. We already have been taught what it takes others many, many years to learn. Are

we using what the Lord has given us for Him, or are we squandering it on ourselves?

BEING CAREFUL WITH THE CHILDREN GOD HAS ENTRUSTED TO US

Humanism in every culture today has targeted children for their agenda, and Christian parents must fight to save their own children's souls. Literally every political, social or religious group in the world targets children as future followers or supporters of their philosophies. Even parents interested in making themselves look good may push precocious children unmercifully to gain fame, power or money. Some may focus on the physical beauty of the child and exploit them in child beauty pageants. Other parents are so focused on rising in the socio-economic world, that they forget the needs of the children to whom they have given birth. Selfish fathers may demand that the mother leave the children and go to work so they can live on a higher standard or leave them just "to get away" to be entertained. Mothers too may have personal interests that do not include caring for children; they do not want to be confined by children. Are neighbors, babysitters, older siblings, relatives or day-care providers really interested in the souls of our children so that they will guard their activities every minute of the day?

Some parents encourage the use of the television, computer games (even the violent ones) or the social media for very young children, because it helps to entertain them and keep them out from under their feet. One of those mediums becomes the constant babysitter and in that sense the children are not just neglected by the parents but are actually being trained by the evil put into their young minds through the media. Are the parents able to monitor everything their children see when they are being entertained like this? One recent article: "Social Media Use Linked to Teen Drinking, Drug Use" cites some pretty startling statistics. **MOTHERS BEWARE!** According to a national survey of American teens, those who use social networking sites are more likely to smoke, drink, and use drugs. On a typical day, 70 percent of teens ages 12 to 17 use social networking sites, and 40 percent have seen pictures of their peers drinking or using drugs on these sites. Some worry that exposure to such images encourages drug use, as teens who had seen such pictures were more than twice as likely to think they would try drugs in the future. Furthermore, teens who use social networking sites were found to be five times more likely to use tobacco, three times more likely to use alcohol, and twice as likely to use marijuana. And what has happened to constructive learning? How much good learning is going on while the children are absorbed in the games or with the social networks?

Immodesty in the home is another issue that bears reconsideration because it leads to all kinds of abuses. Is it possible to understand the mentality that nakedness is appropriate for a three year-old but would be

immodest for anyone else? What children are taught to do when they are three is what they want to do when they are thirteen! Why would it be alright for a mother or a father to walk around in underwear (or its equivalent) in front of sons or daughters at any age? That habit is not being protective of what belongs to the mate or to themselves and is not protecting the scope of what's permissible for the children to see or do later. Some mothers feel free around the family to stay in a nightgown while cooking breakfast. That means no bra under thin material. They know full well they would not want to be found clad that way outside the home, but around the family they assume it to be OK? **God makes it very clear even under the Old Law (Lev. 18 and 20) that, beginning in the family, He wants those barriers up!** Should everyone be free to walk in on someone in the bathroom or the bedroom as they get ready for the day? Should provocative underwear be left lying in the bathroom floor or hanging on a hook for other family members or visitors to see? Why would we disrespect each other in such a way?

Even in bathing small children, when they are big enough to not need aid they are big enough to deserve privacy. Mothers should not nurse uncovered in front of their other children. **It is a balance! Mothers need not be ashamed of what God has given them, but they should be modest.** The other children intuitively know the process, but that does not mean they need to focus on what the mother is doing several times a day! Nor should older siblings be allowed to watch the diaper changing process! Infants cannot protect themselves, and if the mother is not their guard, who will be? It seems in today's world, we just do not protect our thoughts, vision, or behavior the way we should! Family members would not be nearly so tempted to evil if modesty were practiced in every home?

Actual child abuse comes in deceitful packages. According one encyclopedia, "child abuse is the physical, sexual, emotional mistreatment, or neglect of children... Child abuse can occur in a child's home, or in the organizations, schools or communities the child interacts with. There are four major categories of child abuse: neglect, physical abuse, psychological/emotional abuse, and child sexual abuse."

Statistics from every country show that sexual abuse of children has soared over the last twenty years. In India alone, the documented cases of sexual abuse show that more than 50% of its children suffer in one way or another and that most of the abuse takes place **within the family unit**. For generations Thailand's main business has been "tourism" (their euphemism for selling children as slaves to foreign pedophiles). In the USA, the news features case after case of abused, neglected or murdered children. It's a chilling moment when the light goes out in a child's eyes; it is the death of innocence. A once-radiant little person hardens from abuse. The child looks the same, maybe acts almost the same, but something is gone. What's lost is irretrievable. It is the same as when a person dies physically: in a heartbeat,

the soul vanishes. **What can be done about this tragic situation? These tragedies can be minimized or even prevented if the mothers are true “keepers-at-home.”**

- “Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands” (Prov. 14:1). **Spiritually speaking, are we building in our children’s hearts, or plucking down by neglect?**
- “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Prov. 29:15).
- “For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not” (1 Sam. 3:13).
- “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23).
- “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15).
- “None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD...” (Lev. 18:6). This covers a lot of territory!
- “Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you. And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants” (Lev. 18:24-25). Leviticus 18 and 20 would bear close study in order to understand God’s judgment of this hideous behavior.
- “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: 27 (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, **and the land is defiled**;) 28 That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. **29 For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.** 30 Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God” (Lev. 18:26-30).

These scriptures should come to mind when we study a mother’s duty to direct her children’s moral training. Eli, even though his sons were apparently grown, had a responsibility to **stop them from evil**. Particularly as adults, they needed to be dealt with because they were priests and Eli was High Priest (the official law enforcement officer of Israel). If Eli could not stop his sons’ behavior, he should have cast them out of the priesthood, and **according to**

the Law of Moses they should have been stoned. In today's world, we do not continue to have authority over our children after they are grown so that we would be held responsible for an adult child's actions after they have left home, but we do have the **obligation to train and protect them before they get grown!**

The kings in the Old Testament such as Joash, Amaziah, Uzzah, Jotham were held responsible because the people who were under their authority still sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. If children are under our authority, we are responsible for stopping them from evil—PERIOD, no matter what it takes. If we don't know how, we'd better find a way fast or die trying!

If we have a responsibility to **KEEP** (hedge about, guard) our own hearts, how much more are we responsible for keeping the hearts of the impressionable and vulnerable little children over whom we are stewards, to **protect them from themselves!** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" (1 Pet. 5:8). Obviously this does not allow turning a blind eye to our children's misdemeanors, nor does it allow for carelessly letting them be in situations in which they could be tempted. If we were trying to keep a toddler from burning himself on an open fire, would we just warn him against it and turn our backs because we are too busy to watch him constantly? No, we would **make a way to guard him!** If we did not, even the laws of the land would hold us responsible for a burned child.

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of every child, and believing that my child is not foolish enough for inappropriate activity is very unwise in itself. Perhaps they're not prone to these things, but what if they are? Would they announce it to us? If we love our children, and want to leave a legacy of righteousness, **if we want their souls to be saved**, we MUST keep our children WITH us or under our supervision at all times to guard their hearts—not leave them to themselves to be defiled by some aggressive relative, neighbor or friend or to defile each other. Their spiritual eternity could depend on it. And on Judgment Day do you want to be wishing you had a millstone hanged about your neck for your part in the offense of one of these little ones?

QUESTIONS:

1. Study Titus 2:5 and give the literal meaning of "a keeper-at-home?"
2. If a serious need arises, what might be some things a Christian woman could do to earn money while still being a keeper-at-home?
3. According to 1 Timothy 5:14, what is meant by "guide the house?"
4. Explain where the husband comes into this equation.
5. According to Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:1, what happens to young folk that just live for the "fun and good times?"

6. Using Matthew 6:33 and Ecclesiastes 12:13, tell what should be our total priority in life?
7. Do our friends have an effect on how we live our lives? Explain with scripture.
8. Why do some of our acquaintances "hate" us who are living Christ-like (John 7:7)?
9. What are the dangers of marrying a non-Christian (Mark 3:25; 1 Cor. 15:33)?
10. Women who desire to work outside the home must remember their God-given duty. What is that?
11. Explain how there could be "fulfillment" in having a home that God would approve?
12. According to 1 Timothy 6:7-12, what is the root of all evil?
13. Jesus said whoever wants to be great will be a _____ and whoever wants to be chiefest shall be _____ of _____ (Mark 10:42-45).
14. When does our training start in order to become a good "keeper-at-home?"
15. According to Philippians 2:2-8, with whom should we be more concerned?
16. Will we be held responsible for how we spend our time?
17. Give some examples of how we can plan ahead for unseen ways to be of service to others.
18. Consider Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Which sister had her priorities in order? How do you know?
19. Why do we need to practice being faithful in mundane things (Luke 16:10)?
20. What good example did Paul give (Phil. 4:10-12)?
21. How can we "lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19)?
22. Explain Proverbs 17:1 and Proverbs 15:17.
23. Why do we have to be able to see our own faults to be able to change ourselves for the better?
24. How do we feed, give drink, clothe, visit the sick and those in prison for (or to) the Lord?
25. Who is the judge of these things (Matt. 25:31-32)?

26. What is the destination of those who do not care for those in need?
27. What will people who serve those in need "inherit" (Matt. 25:34)?
28. Why should we consider 1 Timothy 6:8 when giving to the poor?
29. Tell how you are preparing to be a keeper-at-home.
30. How would a Christian family benefit from having a mother at home?
31. Considering that the wife is to be a keeper-at-home, how would a foolish woman pluck down her own house with her hands (Prov. 14:1)?
32. If children get into trouble and disobey the laws of God or the laws of the parents, what should a mother do (Prov. 29:15)?
33. In the same verse, what happens if a mother does not discipline her children?
34. When Eli did not restrain his sons, what was God's judgment (1 Sam. 3:13)?
35. Why should we "Keep thy heart with all diligence" (Prov. 4:23)?
36. What is it that drives foolishness from a child (Prov. 22:15)?
37. What often happens when children are left to themselves for long periods of time, and what is God's judgment of this activity (Lev. 18:6)?
38. Why is incest considered such a hideous crime even among atheists or non-Christians (Lev. 18:24-25; 1 Cor. 5:1)?
39. Why did God drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan? What was His judgment of their crimes, i.e. what should be done to them (Lev. 18:26-30)?
- 40. If you do not want your children to be counted vile and worthy of death in the eyes of God, what are you doing to protect them?**

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Lesson 13

When I was a girl, I had an old, stone-faced English teacher who made me fall in love with words. In her mouth they marched, danced and sang as they became Beowulf, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton or Frost. I saw multitudes of Technicolor scenes before me while she addressed the class in a barely audible voice. There were others like the home economics teacher who encouraged me to love homemaking and to create beautiful apparel out of fabric and thread and the science teacher who helped me to see the wonders of the nature all around me. College music teachers bragged up my ability as a singer while lofty Epicurean types inspired me to become more and more aware of my five senses. In the first three years of college, I took 21 hours each semester. My appetite for learning was insatiable. As I sought to embrace life and live it to the full, all these and more appealed to my intellect and to my foolish pride.

Years later I met someone who helped me to love God and His word, and my mind and heart began a metamorphosis. The transition has not been easy, since the lure of life in the world still calls from every direction. Yet the true "life" (John 17:3) has so much greater call that it has made all the difference. Because of God's word, choices are already made. Like the Philippians, we are bought and redeemed, but we are still working out our own salvation from day to day (Phil. 2:12).

Having known brethren who grew up in the church, who would not humble themselves to serve the one who created them, I have wondered if they too found the things of the world more appealing than the things of eternity. Their reasoning could be quite simple. Maybe not with words, but with their lives they were saying, **"To me, the world is in Technicolor, while religion is in black and white."**

Having actually heard such a statement from one I love still sends chills down my spine and breaks my heart. So why is the world in Technicolor? Obviously comparing Technicolor to black and white provides the contrast some need to express their feelings about how flat and valueless religion is to them. They mean that the world and the things of the world appeal to them like glittering jewels calling on every hand. Do they understand they cannot **serve two masters**? Apparently they do, and we also should understand that principle (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13) but make the better choice. Either we live

to satisfy our fleshly desires that bring pleasure on earth, or we live to sow to and bear the fruit of the spirit while building treasure in heaven. Some know enough not to try to serve two masters, but they often choose the wrong one.

- **Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.** If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John 2:15-17).

Why is this commandment unacceptable to most people? Almost everyone I know changes the words in this passage to say: do not love the evil in the world. Is that what it says? Is this talking about the people? Who is in the world? We have neighbors, friends, enemies and brethren. We are commanded to love our neighbor. We also are commanded to love our brethren, enemies and friends. Who else is there in the world? Is this a contradiction in the Bible? Is He talking about souls or things?

Loving the “people” of the world is loving ones’ neighbor, which is commanded and good.

- “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Though the world hates us, we must love them (even our enemies).

- “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:18-19).
- “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:44-45).

We were born into this material world, not into worldliness.

- “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Tim. 6:6-7).

The word “world” is used in the sense of the physical world much the same as Romans 1:25 uses the word *creation*.

- “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature (creation) **more than the Creator**, who is blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 1:25).

- NT:3844=**para**, which is a primary preposition; properly, near; i.e. (with genitive case) from beside (literally or figuratively), (with dative case) at (or in) the vicinity of (objectively or subjectively), (with accusative case) to the proximity with (local [especially beyond or opposed to] or causal [on account of]):

The verse (if translated exactly according to the Greek words God inspired) would literally read, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the **creation (what God created) along side of (or as well as) God.**"

The cares of this physical world are what choke the word.

- "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22).

The word *world* in the Greek language is *kosmos*—literally orderly arrangement—the same word we use in English for the *universe*. What is he saying? What does he mean when he says, "Do not love the *kosmos*?" What about the things around us in the world? Do not love "the things that are in the world." He has to be talking about the world itself and the material things in it.

Do you know any scripture that contradicts this command which says we can love the material things of the world but are not to love "worldliness" or the "evil" things which are in the world? At first glance Colossians 2:20-22 appears to give permission to love the material things in the world.

- Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men (Col. 2:20-22)?

In Colossians 2:20-22, what are we dead to? We obviously are dead to the old man (Rom. 6:6) and the things of the old man which would include the rudiments of the world that the Gentiles seek after (Matt. 6:32). Yes, we are to leave the rudiments and principles of this world. So what are the rules the world has? What do we touch? We touch material things. What do we taste? We taste the material things. What do we handle? Again it is material things. What will happen to all material in Colossians 2:22? Is this not the same command as in 1 John 2:15, because all these things will perish (1 John 2:17). Who gives commandments regarding these material things? **God commands Christians not to love these things, but men make new laws which say do not eat it or touch it.** God does not command us not to eat or touch it; he says not to love it. What should we do? How can we not love these material things? We must focus on and love eternal things. If we love the world and then die, our chief love is gone. What if we love purity, holiness and

goodness? We can carry that with us and not suffer any loss at all. What does he want us to love? Will it be the physical man or the spiritual man, which is renewed day by day?

- While **we look not at the things which are seen**, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18).

What is Paul not looking toward? Did he go around with his eyes covered? What does he mean? Those earthly things were not valuable to him. He was not concerned with the outward things. Did he love them? They are neither eternal nor important to him. Is there any command that tells us to love the material of the world? Jesus did nothing without specific authority from his Father (John 5:19, 30) and we should follow his example. How much did Jesus have when he died? We know that Jesus was satisfied with food and clothing (1 Tim. 6:7-8).

According to 1 John 2:15, what happens if I love the world? **The love of the Father is not in me!** One man was proud to announce that he loved the world and things of the world, and another immediately finished quoting the scripture to him saying, "Then the love of the Father is not in you." The first man declared "That scripture does not mean that!"

If God does not say what he means, how can you know what He means? 1 John 2:16 tells why we should not love the world. He names the things of the world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." He names the things of the world. Desires of flesh and eyes are not of the Father. This includes **words that march, dance and sing** as they become Beowulf, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton or Frost! Do you know anyone who does not love at least some of the things around them?

- And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh **and of the mind**; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Eph. 2:1-3).

Foods may taste good, but we should not love them. What should be our motivation when we eat? We need to eat for strength and not for drunkenness (Ecc. 10:17). "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). How does Satan appeal? He appeals to us through the desires (lust is the same Greek word) of the flesh and mind. What do the nations of the world

do? They love and enjoy this world—this *cosmos* or universe. What are they according to the last part of this verse? They are children of wrath.

Think back on the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:21-22 and pay particular attention to what causes some to be offended.

- Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and **the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word**, and he becometh unfruitful (Matt. 13:21-22).

What are all these desires of the world? They are things that take our time and effort. If our lives are focused on the things of the world, how much time do we have left for the Lord? How can we be good ground?

- They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are **choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection** (Luke 8:13-14)?.

Note that in Luke he adds two more things and describes the problem quite nicely. In verse 14, some brethren are choked. The weeds take all their time. Notice what is choking them—the cares, riches, pleasures of this life. **These things are not evil in themselves.** Jesus used money but he did not love it (Matt. 17:27; 1 Tim. 6:10). He was not given to pleasures the world enjoys. Those things are all temporary. No matter what we do with them they are only temporary. Only what we do for the Lord is eternal.

Can anyone who loves this cosmos be pleasing to God? Can you love the cosmos and the good things of the world as long as you do not love the evil? If that is possible, then of what value is the command in 1 John 2:15-17? Let's see what else Jesus has to say in the Sermon on the Mount. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and **mammon**" (Matt. 6:24). Why did the translators put in the word **mammon** instead of **material** things? What is mammon? The English translators used the Aramaic word *mammon* to stay out of trouble with the one who commissioned the translation. What would King James have done to them if they had translated that word properly? How does this apply to us? We must love one and hate the other. How do we hate these material things? Do we take a hammer and go around beating them? How do we hate the world and the things of the world? Why can we not serve God and mammon at the same

time? Is there a difference between not serving mammon and not loving the world?

- No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon.** 14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. 15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16:13-15).

Literally the word ***mammon*** in both passages means **material**. Why did the Pharisees not like this sermon? They coveted the material things. What should we not love? How can we hate or despise material? What did Jesus think of material things?

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, **despising** the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). What did Jesus think of man’s judgment? What did he think of the shame? Where did the shame come from? The word “despise” is Strong’s Greek # 2706 and is the same word that is used in Matt. 6:24—hold to one and despise the other. Jesus’ despised the shame, but we must understand where the shame came from. Whose judgment was it? Man judged the cross as a shame. What did Jesus think of their judgment? He held on to God’s judgment and despised man’s. What if we hold on to people’s judgment that material things are important? Do we value those material things?

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15). Jesus died that we would not live for ourselves. If we live to ourselves, what do we love? We love the world and the things in it—*mammon*. But if we live for Jesus, will we love the material things; will we value them?

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2). Notice in verse 1, we need to seek the things which are above. Will that be physical or spiritual things? Christ is at the right hand of God. Are there physical things there? Our minds should not be on the physical. This passage is saying we should literally put our minds on things above. What about things on the earth? Should we set our minds on them? **Obviously we need food and clothing to live, so we know we must use the material things.** Even so, Jesus said not to be concerned about food and clothing (Matt. 6:8; Matt. 6:30-34). He said these were the things the nations seek after. We need to put our mind on things above and NOT on things on the earth. If we do not set our minds on things on the earth, will we love them?

The definition of “set your affection on” in Colossians 3:2 is specifically “to exercise the mind.” This indicates that this choice between loving and living for the temporary world and loving and living for spiritual things and eternity is **not simply a one-time decision; it is a continual process** as Paul described in 1 Corinthians 9:27. “But I keep under my (physical) body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27). This must be a daily battle, a daily decision, and a consciously chosen state of mind in order to keep our minds in the right direction. “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed **day by day**. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:16-18). In order to have the strength to make this daily choice, we must perpetually remember what Paul speaks of, that this world is “but for a moment,” and that there is “a far more exceeding and eternal” glory awaiting us if we focus on that spiritual world instead of this temporary one.

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, **is not of the Father**, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:16-17). Who created these things? The one who created our mouths, the same one who made us so we can be tempted is the creator of all. He tells us three temptations here: desires of the flesh, of the eye and pride of life.

What about our five senses? Some love music and feed their ears all the time. They are attached to the plugs in their ears wherever they go. What about the smell of flowers, fresh soil, rain or perfume? Some love the smell of fancy food. Others love feeling of things—touch. The Lord has created us so we can be tempted. He made Christ the same way. What is his point here: God has made everything we can know with our senses to be temporary. These things are of the world. In verse 17 we see that the world passes away and so will the temporary desires.

Notice that Solomon says **he gave himself to the GOOD things of the world**. He slipped in a place or two to do evil, but that was not his intention. His intention was to enjoy the good things.

“So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: **also my wisdom remained with me**. 10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, **I withheld not my heart from any joy**; for **my heart rejoiced in all my labour**: and this was my portion of all my labour. 11 Then I looked

on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Ecc. 2:9-11).

Was he involved with the cares of this world? He says plainly that he gave himself fully to them. He gave his heart to any joy and he even mentions wine. He tried it all. Was there anything eternal in the things he tried? Did he enjoy them? **His heart rejoiced in all his labor.** Even work did not make him sad, but there was no eternal profit.

What about today? What is the difference between us and Solomon? Why did Solomon stop doing what he said he set out to do? He realized there was no eternal good in enjoying all those things. Notice he did not say there was no profit on the earth (under the sun). He talks about the profit of wisdom and of knowledge. There is much profit in wisdom. Does the sun shine on wisdom? No, the sun cannot shine on it because wisdom is a spiritual quality. Does the sun shine on purity, godliness, temperance or holiness? On the earth, the sun does not shine on those qualities because spiritual things are invisible. Then what was Solomon unhappy about? He was not happy with whatever the sun shined on—he was not happy with the earthly things. None of the earthly things were eternal.

The Pharisee knew exactly what Jesus referred to when he said they could not love God and mammon (the material world).

- "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. **And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him**" (Luke 16:13-14).
- "And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods" (Luke 16:1).

Pharisees would not let go of this world, so God did not open their eyes. Will God open my eyes if I love this world? God has given a test and a commandment. We must make a choice. The Pharisees chose to love this world. If we are like the Pharisees, we will spend eternity with them. If we believe Jesus, what will we do? If we have faith in Jesus, what will we do? If we trust him what will we do? We will turn **our minds** away from all these temporary, earthly things toward things that will last forever (spiritual things). Most people will not accept this teaching. This is the very price everyone must pay, this is the entrance to the gate—the narrow gate (Matt. 7:13-14). Not many are able to go through that narrow gate.

Some who have tried to hold on to both lives want to change God's word to read "love not worldliness," nor the things of "worldliness." However, the

word our Heavenly Father used was not “worldliness.” His scriptures use the word “world” in several senses, including the **people** and the **material** world.

Demas’ love for this world caused him to leave God. Others also fell to the same temptation. They obviously failed to heed the warning in Romans 13:14. “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

- “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia” (2 Tim. 4:10).
- “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17).
- “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (Rev. 3:16-17).

Gaining the whole world is not speaking about the people but about material.

- “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:24-26).

We must love the people in the world in the way that God commands us to, but we must not love the world itself—that is, the material world itself or the material things in the world. The world in 1 John 2 cannot be talking about the people of the world for we are commanded to love them, including worldly people.

- “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:16-17).

The world He mentions in 1 John 2 is the world that will pass away one day. The people of this world will not pass away; they either go to heaven or hell. The material world will pass away. Jesus never was in the world in the sense of the worldly people, but simply in the material world.

- “And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Heb. 1:6).

The brethren are not in the world in the sense of the worldly people, but all of us are in the material world.

- “Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Pet. 5:9).

This material world will pass away and everything in it.

- “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33).
- “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,” (2 Pet. 3:10-11).

So many have such a hard time with giving up their love for the creation (Rom. 1:25)! We should be **long past** the stage where we have to focus on the wonders of creation to remind us that the world has a Creator! The Holy Spirit testified through Paul that this truth is the first truth every person should understand, because He reveals it to all men (Rom. 1:19-20). Anyone who has accepted this visual testimony should have no business “kissing the hand” toward the sun or standing around staring, gawking, gaping **in adoration** at the stars, planets or the beautiful things on the earth.

Final thoughts: Connect the two scriptures (Rom. 1 and 1 John 2) via Colossians 3:1-7 and the theme of Ecclesiastes: the world passeth away and the lusts thereof, so the only thing useful is to serve God, and work for spiritual good, **not involve ourselves in a love for what will be burned up** (2 Pet. 3:10-11). Romans 1:23 and Colossians 3:5 show that love of material and living our lives **for** material is (as Luke 16 explains) impossible to mix with serving God. IF we are truly risen with Christ (dead to our old man), then we should **really** have our affections elsewhere than on what Christ came to overcome! Perhaps that can be made clearer by understanding that the things of the world and our flesh actually **war** against the things of the spirit.

- Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; (1 Pet. 2:11).
- This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and **these are contrary the one to the other**: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would (Gal. 5:16-17).
- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap **corruption** (5356. **phthora**; **decay, i.e. ruin—Ecc.2:11**); but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us

not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Gal. 6:7-9).

- If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 **Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth** (Col. 3:1-2).

Our minds may be convinced all this is right and good, but how easy is it to do what we know to do? Change is never easy because we already love this world and the things in it. We have much work to do to change our habits. We need to grow more and more in our love for spiritual things. Naturally our love for material will grow less and less. Remember: we start out as babies, but the Lord expects us to grow. We cannot do it all in one day. We must acknowledge what we are, where our thoughts are and then ask God to cleanse our hearts. Gradually we need to set our minds more and more on those things above. The determination to try is paramount.

QUESTIONS: Answer in complete sentences.

1. According to 1 John 2:15, what is NOT in a man if he loves the world?
2. When John talks about loving the world in 1 John 2:15-17, is that the same thing as loving worldliness?
3. Does the word 'world' in 1 John 2:15 refer to worldliness when God describes the world as having things in it?
4. Does the 'world' in 1 John 2:15 refer to the men in the world if God told us to love our neighbors?
5. Compare Romans 1:18-25 and tell how that passage fits with the one in the question above.
6. After I have understood that God has made everything in this world, should I worship God or the things He has made?
7. According to Luke 16:14, what is mammon?
8. Why did the Pharisees not like this teaching about mammon (Luke 16:14)?
9. Ponder the statement made to the unjust steward in Luke 16:8. Tell why this is true.
10. Should we love the world in the sense of the people in the world?
11. Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13 talk about serving two masters. What are those two masters?
12. Why can a man not serve and love the world as well as serve his Creator (Matt. 6:24)?
13. Who/What makes the world seem as if it is in Technicolor?
14. Why would religion seem to be in black and white?
15. Why did Demas leave the service of Paul the apostle and ultimately leave God (2 Tim. 4:10)?
16. Which world are we born into (1 Tim. 6:6-7)?
17. According to 1 John 2:16-17, what all is in the world?
18. Are we in the world in the sense of being part of the worldly people (1 Pet. 5:9; 1 Cor. 5:9-11)?
19. Which world in John 2:15-17 is going to pass away (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; 2 Pet. 3:10-11)?
20. If the world and the things of the world will be burned up, what kind of person ought we to be?