

Lessons From the Fall

Equipping Men to be Godly Leaders 1

Introduction:—pray

Read Gen 3:1-19

In the beginning God's first institution was the family, more specifically marriage.

1. Man is the leader/ head. I Cor. 11:3 "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.". It is clear that God has established an order of authority here. Each person has a different role to play depending upon where he or she is in God's order.

A. Man was created first.—Gen. 2

B. The woman was created from the man.

C. The woman was created for the man.

D. The man named the woman.—the ability to name showed authority

E. God dealt directly with the man—verse 9

2. Man is accountable as the leader.

A. Evidence in Genesis shows us that God created man to be the leader is seen in the fact that the man was held responsible for the fall into sin, even though the woman sinned first. God gave him the commandment and was holding him accountable. This is the way it is with leadership...the head answers for all those under his authority.

3. Male passivity is the root of all evil.

A. Adam failed in his leadership by not protecting his wife.

B. So is the first sin really Adam's passivity and his failure to lead & protect his wife?

Let's see what we can learn from the account of Adam & his failure. What were the qualities that Adam failed to display in the face of Satan's attack on his family that would have enabled him to be the spiritual leader God created him to be? As we answer that question we can discover ways to help improve our own performance as leaders as well.

A. Alertness/Vigilance - the very warning not to eat from the tree should have made him super alert to any suggestions to the contrary. Where was Adam?? Not only did Satan have full access to Eve but after she ate the fruit & offered it to him, he ate gladly without question or protest. Let me ask you, are you aware of the temptation your wife and children are facing this week? Or are you just waiting for the results of their yielding to temptation to blow up in your face? Talk to them. Find out what is in their

minds & hearts. Keep track of who they spend time with. What they read, view on the screen, music they hear. Is the serpent working his wiles on your little flock? Are you alert to the dangers faced by those under your command?

B. Initiative - A man with initiative makes things happen. A man without initiative 'waits' for things to happen to him and to his family. Adam 'waited' to see what would happen after the serpent confronted Eve. He 'waited' for her to approach him. Then when offered the fruit by his wife, Adam didn't rebuke her error or confront the serpent, he 'waited' to see what would happen. Mr. Adam was what we now know only too well; your basic passive male. Are you showing initiative in your home by setting the agenda, asking questions, requiring accountability? Or do you just go with the flow? Do you make things happen in your family life or are you a passive passenger, letting others steer the ship, letting drift wherever it will? You are the leader, the protector, and the teacher of your family. Each of these roles implies the need for you to be proactive. Remember men, one day the Lord will seek us out as he did Adam in the garden & ask an accounting for our leadership in the home.

C. Courage - men seem fearful of exerting authority in their homes. They are afraid of displeasing their wife & children, making a wrong choice, or that the family will not follow their leadership. It would have taken courage for Adam to stand up to Eve & correct her or to confront the wily serpent. The easiest thing was for Adam to go along & keep the peace. There seems to be nothing worse for the average man than have his wife unhappy with him. Failing to stand for principle or to correct those who are in the wrong keeps things peaceful. Of course, it may lead the whole human race into millennia of sin and misery, but hey, it keeps the wife happy! Are you more concerned with pleasing wife, children & men over God? One sure mark of a leader is his willingness to take actions that bring him under attack from those who don't share his understanding of what it means to please God. The family leader is a man of courage because he fears God.

D. Vision - A forth quality lacking in Adam and in too many of his heirs is that of vision. We're talking about long- term vision, the ability to look beyond immediate concerns to the future implications of today's decisions. Surely Adam was not thinking about the future at all when he took the fruit from Eve. He must not have reflected too much on what the Lord meant when he threatened him with death. He certainly must not have thought about what harm would result for his wife and children. Would he have taken the fruit if he had paused to reflect on the millennia of pain and suffering that would be caused by this one bad choice?

Adam's lack of vision damned mankind. Jesus' clarity of vision led him to become the world's Savior. Godly men must be able to gauge the effects of their present choices on their children and their children's children

What are the long-term implications of the choice's you make today? What difference will it make that you have (or neglect) family worship and Bible instruction? How will your grandchildren be affected by your prayer life today? How will your children be shaped by your choice of vocation? By where you choose to live? By the church to which you belong? By how you choose to educate them? By your policies concerning peer-grouping or entertainment or driving privileges? The choices you make today,

even many that may seem insignificant, will shape the lives of your descendants and reverberate through eternity. Adam didn't think ahead. Jesus did. You and I must.

E. Responsibility- The final quality absent in Adam but needed by all men is a sense of responsibility. For generations men have passed off to their wives primary responsibility for child rearing. They are passive, disinterested, and irritated when their wives attempt to draw them into the decision-making process.

Like a captain of a ship, a father may delegate authority, but remains responsible.

The lessons from Genesis are many, but take these three with you if you forget everything else. First, beware of those who question the clear teaching of the Bible. Don't allow others to create a cloud of confusion about scriptural teachings that are perfectly plain.

Second, it is perfectly plain in Scripture that God has established an order of authority in this world. Feminism is a lie. Men are God-ordained leaders, and they should act like it.

Third, this means you're a leader. We need to act like it!

We have been discussing ways that a Husband and a Father can turn his heart toward home and to his family.—an important part that should be talked about is discipleship and training

The home is the original society in which each person is placed by God at birth. It is, for better or worse, the place where people are shaped —their intellect, their values, their character, their aspirations, All that a person later becomes depends upon the factors that forged him in his youth, and the home is the primary shaper of young human beings.

We read in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

How does the truth of God make its way from the heart of a father to the hearts of his children?

Through an intimate discipleship relationship, a relationship that continues at all times (from rising up to laying down) This, by the way, is "home education" which the Bible presents as the way to provide godly training for the next generation.

All this assumes, of course, that the father himself has turned his own heart to the Lord so that his life is a model for his family. The command of Deuteronomy 6 began: "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart" (v. 6). It is impossible to pass on to children a heart for the Lord and His Word if the father himself is not truly walking with God.

Psalms 78: 1-8 describes the process of fathers passing on a godly heritage through the generations. The two main components of that heritage, the content of a father's teaching of his children, are these: the works of God and the Word of God. God's mighty works include creation and redemption and His whole

plan for history as it unfolds in fulfillment of His purpose. To study the works of God is thus to explore science, history, literature, art, music, language, etc.—all that He has made and all that He has done through history and culture. The Bible itself, of course, must also be at the center of a father's teaching plan—its content, its doctrine, and its application to every area of life. The Bible must be the foundation of all other learning.

Psalm 119:105 says "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path".—Live your theology.

So how do fathers win the hearts of their children? They do so by godly training and maintaining a loving relationship with them.

To properly train a child a father must first deal with sin in his child in a biblical manner. He must discipline rebellion with the rod. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). "Foolishness" here is not just silliness, it is willful disobedience. If a father does not use the rod for rebellion, no other training will have much effect. The law he enforces in the home is the law of God, and he himself is subject to that law. You can always tell which child is not spanked when you are standing in the line at a grocery store.

Beware of those psychologist that offer a new, different or better way than God's way to discipline.

Let's talk about what a loving relationship looks like...

A loving relationship exhibits justice. Jacob was unjust toward his sons, showing favoritism toward Joseph. This embittered the other sons, alienating their affections from their father, and led to their mistreatment of Joseph

A loving relationship is also characterized by sacrifice and service. Jesus showed the full extent of His love for His disciples by washing their feet. A father must wash the feet of his children. He must set aside his will in order to do what is best for them. He must sacrifice his desires, his comfort and his self-pleasing agenda in order to meet their needs. Such sacrifice may display itself in everything from taking the time to teach them himself, or giving up his plans for an evening in order to have family time. Children will become exasperated by a self-centered father who fails to yield his time and resources to serve his family.

A loving relationship is further characterized by demonstrations of compassion and tenderness. It is tempting for men who may not have a natural inclination to demonstrate tenderness to define their fatherly roles purely in terms of training, decision-making, and such. But we must not miss the essential quality of demonstrated love and affection which are so necessary to reach the heart of a child.

A loving relationship is demonstrated by heartfelt encouragement. Hear the cry of the father in Proverb: 23:26 "My son, give me your heart". A godly father does not merely present truth and duty to his children; he appeals to them earnestly to believe and obey! He urges them. He encourages them. He entreats them. He lets his children see his own passion for the Lord, and he invites them to share that passion.

It is just as the Lord promised in Proverbs 22:6 " Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." Why? Because once a fathers heart is turned to his child and that child's heart is turned to his father, there is no breaking the bond that is created!

We read in Malachi 4:6—the last words of the old testament "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

You know, to be able to do all of this requires families to use their time well. It is common for families to be so busy with seemingly good activities that they have no time left for the best: quiet family times for conversation, reading, worship, play—the stuff of which memories are made by. Fathers must guard against the insane busyness that characterizes modern family life. Also **A FATHER HAS NO BUSINESS POURING HIS ENERGY AND TIME INTO OTHER CALLINGS UNTIL HE HAS MAXIMIZED HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO HIS OWN FAMILY!**

Now let's get down to some practical application of all these principles. One way in which a man can begin to act like a family leader in his home is through a daily assignment and report system. This is especially important for the man who must leave home for the better part of the day to work

In the morning before he leaves for work (or the night before if his morning departure is too early) the father takes a few minutes with his wife to go over the assignments/schedule for the day. This would include especially the school schedule, including specific lessons for the children. However it would also encompass household chores, family projects, and other activities planned for the day. The purpose is to have a common understanding between husband and wife. He is announcing his plan for his household for the day; she is affirming the plan and her intention to carry it out.

When he returns in the evening he takes a few minutes once again. This time he checks in with both his wife and children to get a report on how the plan was carried out during his absence. His wife gives feedback on the school lessons and the other activities, making special note of the attitude of the children through the day. Dad looks at some of the schoolwork and asks the children about their day. What is happening here is that he is holding both Mom and the children accountable for their work while he was gone. He in turn is getting the information he needs to be accountable to his heavenly Boss concerning his little domain.

This simple system has great benefit of keeping the focus on the father as the leader & for his accountability to be involved in the lives of his family. By verifying the plan before the day starts and checking up on it after the fact, he is at least twice daily functioning in his leadership role. This is good for him as it keeps him involved and responsible. It is good for the children as they realize who is in charge and respect their father as a genuine authority in the home. But this system is especially good for Mom, who is relieved of a great burden God never meant her to bear. She was created to help her husband and carry out his decisions. She was not meant to make the big decisions and enforce them on the children.

You may be thinking WOW is will be tough for our family....maybe just Sundays—date lunches.

Couples without children can encourage those with children.

We just mentioned schooling, but what is the goal of education. Education ought not to be seen as an end in itself. Nor should it be viewed in terms of mere academic or social preparation for life. Knowledge, by itself, is nothing and leads only to pride ("Knowledge puffs up," 1 Cor. 8:1) We could give our children the very best academic preparation in the world and only end up making them more effective instruments in the devil's hands. No, God has something higher in mind. Education is not just about what a child knows; it is primarily about how he lives. Understood in its broadest terms, teaching is character training. The great objective of all instruction must be Christ-like men and women.

Those who are informed by a biblical and Hebraic perspective would say that true "education" is discipleship. It is a process of training the whole person, not just the mind. The goal is not a mind stuffed with facts; the goal is a changed person.

The heart is the most important part of a person "for out of it spring the issues of life" (Prov.4:23). The purpose of life is to love God with whole heart (Deut. 6:5)and this purpose is realized in children as parents have God's word engrafted in their own hearts and then impress that Word on their children. Fathers are to say to their sons, "Let your heart retain my words; keep my commands, and live" (Prov. 4:4)

Since the purpose of education is to love God with the whole heart and to have His commandments lodged in the heart, the method must be one that reaches the heart. Discipleship—along-the-way living with the two people to whom the child is closest (his parents)—is God's method for reaching the heart of children.

The method is seen also in Jesus' relationship with the Twelve. He did not enroll his disciples in a classroom course and address only their minds. He chose them "that they might be with Him" (Mk. 3:14) and they talked, worked, walked, ate, and slept together for over three years. They were his apprentices. They learned by watching, listening, and doing as Jesus taught them about, and modeled for them, the life God wanted them to live.

If you replace the parents with other people, even godly fellow believers, as the primary teachers of your children, you disrupt the parent-child bond that is God's chosen channel of grace and influence toward a child. Remember God wants to turn the hearts of fathers and mothers to their children, and children to their parents

Tamper with any of the facets of God's revealed plan, and you cannot expect that your children will turn out to be godly men and women. Scripture gives us a promise in Proverbs 22:6: our children will not depart from God's way if we faithfully raise them according to the way they should go. Modern Christians have come to doubt the truth of this verse because they are seeing their children fall off the path in such great numbers. But the problem is not God's plan or His faithfulness. The problem is that we have departed from His plan in so many ways.

Sometimes a father's teaching and exhortations of his children prove inadequate: his kids fails to honor God by obeying their parents. This is the time for the father to do more than talk—he needs to act. He must correct and restrain their bad behavior

One of the saddest stories in the Bible is that of Eli and his sons (1 Samuel 2-4). Eli was the chief priest of Israel in the generation before King Saul. It was he to whom the boy Samuel was entrusted by his mother Hannah, to be raised in the priestly family. Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as priests under the direction of their father during the time Samuel was being brought up

Surprisingly, the scriptures record "Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the Lord" .

When Eli heard of his son's sins, what was his response? He rebuked his sons in a way that showed the seriousness of their offenses. But it wasn't enough. "Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father..."_ (2:25).

What was God's response? we read of it in (3:13) "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them".

God takes seriously a father's duty to demand and to obtain proper behavior from his children.

This would be a good time to discuss prayer.

A leader has a duty to pray for those entrusted to his care. Samuel, the priest and prophet who led the Israelites just prior to their having a king, said to them in his farewell address, "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23). It is a sin against God for a leader to fail to pray for those under his care. This certainly applies as well to the leader of a family.

We should establish a daily time for personal devotions.

We should use the prayers in Scripture. We should pray for the fruit of the Spirit and other specific character traits to grow in the lives of each member of our family.

We should pray for a hedge of protection around our family members. (Psalm 34:7). Be sure to address both physical and spiritual dangers.

We read in James 5:16 that "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"

Men, you have to be immersed in prayer and the Word to carry any of this out.

This leads us now into discussing family worship.

When a family goes through a day without corporately acknowledging God, they are, for that day, living as humanists. The children of that household are being taught a subtle lesson: while we talk about God, He does not affect our daily lives.

Family worship is the most important obligation of a Christian father. If you think you and your family are too busy to find time to worship God together, you are busier than the Lord wants you to be.

There are three basic elements to family worship: praise, Bible-reading, and prayer.

1) Praise is simply the response of creatures to their Creator, of saints to their Savior, of children to their heavenly Father. It is acknowledging the greatness of God and the greatness of His works. Praise can be expressed in prayer, in the reading of a psalm, or in a hymn or chorus. Children especially enjoy singing, so having the family sing praise to God—even if it is literally a joyful "noise"—is a desirable part of any family worship plan.

2) Bible reading is God speaking to us. As a family gathers in His presence, this is the most natural of activities. The Bible reveals God, communicates wisdom, points us to the Savior, and tells us how to live. It is our spiritual food. Feasting on a portion of it each day is the best prescription for family health.

3) Prayer is our speaking to God. Through it we can express praise for who God is, thanksgiving for His blessings, confession for our sins, and supplication for God's help in our needs. The simpler the plan for family worship the better. Just gather your household, read a chapter of the Bible, sing a hymn, and lead in prayer. As you get in the habit of doing this and feel comfortable, you can begin to experiment with other ideas.

Here are some of those other possibilities: You can have a discussion on the passage you read (commentaries are helpful for harder portions of scripture); practice Bible memory (scripture to song is great for the younger ones & for some of us older ones); read a book based on the Shorter Catechism; hear insights each family member has gotten from their own personal devotions; incorporate your wife and children in the reading and prayer; have the children provide "special music", instruments and all; your children can act out a bible story you are studying; read a missionary story once a week (some real life heroes); focus prayer on different topics on different days, like church families on Monday, missionaries on Tuesday, government leaders on Wednesday, etc. The key is to include the three basic elements of any family worship time, also adding some things that will benefit/encourage the younger ones in your family. Family worship is also a great tool in training the little ones to sit still and honor God during church.

When King David was bringing the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem there was a mishap that caused him to leave it for a time at the house of a man named Obed-Edom. Scripture makes this report: "The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the house Of Obed-Edom and all that he had" (1 Chron. 13:14). The Ark symbolized the presence of God among His people, and when God was thus present in the house of Obed-Edom, he and his family were mightily blessed!

God doesn't live in boxes or temples. He is present wherever two or three gather in his name (Matt. 18:20). When a family gathers in God's presence on a regular basis, God is in their midst in a special way. If you want to be blessed like the family of Obed-Edom, make the Lord a daily part of your family life.

Worshiping together in church is also important. We cannot find examples in Scripture, where the family is segregated and separated by age. It is important for the children to be under the Pastor's teaching.

A final verse and thought before I'm finished.

Ecclesiastes 12:13,14 says "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgement, with every secret thing, whether good or evil".

The future course of the world will be determined by what men do in their families and in the churches. I have said this before but it is worth repeating, you cannot do any of this in your own strength, you have to be immersed in prayer and God's Word.