

## **Family – God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

Thirty-Five years ago family expert Dr. James Dobson said...

“The Western world stands at a great crossroads in its history. It is my opinion that our very survival as a people will depend upon the presence or absence of masculine leadership in millions of homes... I believe, with everything within me, that husbands hold the keys to the preservation of the family.” – Dr. James Dobson

In 2015, it is not hard to see that we have not experienced societal success in regard to effective male or female leadership in the home; and more often than not we have taken the wrong turn at that critical crossroads Dr. Dobson warned of.

God's plan for the family and each member and gender is strategic. Even in its varied and diverse forms the family has always been a sacred union and covenant community designed for the good of God's creation. He has determined to use that divine union

for housing and expressing His truth. History has shown that His truth when rightly taught, heard, acknowledged, and honored can bless and flourish the family to become a fortress not only that protects God's truth, but projects the family as well. That means that within the family God has not only an impenetrable plan of defense, but also a precise victorious offensive strategy as well! The family is God's ultimate plan for us – it is a perfect strategy for leading imperfect people, and within that strategy lies the truth. That truth is the wisdom, and order needed for families to thrive, to grow, to recover, to heal, to hope, to overcome, and to live by faith in God.

Eighty-seven years ago George Bernard Shaw wrote...

"The truth is that Socialism must have a tremendous effect on marriage and the family. It is on marriage that the secular State is likely to clash most sensationally with the Churches, because the Churches claim that marriage is a metaphysical business governed by an absolute right and wrong

which has been revealed to them by God, and which the State must therefore enforce without regard to circumstances. Thus, it seems, the State will finally settle what marriage is to be, no matter what the Churches say." - George Bernard Shaw

"Abolish the family! On what foundation is the present family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the conservative middle class. But this state of things cannot be found anywhere outside of that. This family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital." - Karl Marx

Satan's strategy to counteract God's plan is a shrewd one. He begins his process simply but ends it in a web of deceit and godless man made ideology. His focus is on enticing man, woman, and child away from his or her God-given roles and responsibilities to each other and to their families. He does this to every generation and to every family. His focus is on what is fair and not

what is just, on what is wrong and not what is right, on a lie and not truth. He uses all means possible - economics, culture, race, social, political, religion, celebrity, escapism, addiction, morals and ethics, technology, pride and prejudice, things hidden and things exposed. His aim is to misdirect, to misinform, to misuse and to misguide fathers, mothers, husband, wives, and children into believing that God's idea of the family is a threat, a religious lie conceived in ancient Judaism, manipulated by mythical Mosaic law, and perpetuated through Judaeo-Christian dogma. There is no boundary that Satan will not cross, there is no means that He will not use to destroy the family. The origin of this conflict and attack is spiritual and always has been. Being deceived, we have believed it to be something other than what it is, so we spend valuable time and resources trying to solve every symptom instead of the cause. The cause is spiritual - it always has been. In spite of how the cause manifests itself through circumstance and happenstance, from Adam and Eve, to you and I - our struggles, situations, and salvation are spiritual.

Ephesians 6:10-18

**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. ESV**

## **Biblical Messaging for the Family**

**God's Strategy #1: Sacred Union** - To unite and strengthen a husband's spiritual influence with his wife, and the wife with her husband. God uses this union to bring mutual health, understanding and fulfillment to the emotional and physical needs of their marriage.

**God's Strategy #2: Divine Authority** - To unite and strengthen a father and mother's spiritual influence and divine authority with their children. It is God's plan to use this influence and authority to bring health, understanding, and guidance to the emotional and physical relationship of parent and child.

**God's Strategy #3: Committed Community** - To unite and strengthen a family's spiritual connection and commitment with their church. It is God's plan to bring the power of Word and worship, the call to service, and the love of a shared community of faith to the emotional and physical needs of each family member.

## **Secular Messaging to the Family**

**Satan's Counter Strategy #1: Godless Alliance** - To isolate and alienate a husband's emotional - and physical relationship with his wife and to destroy their spiritual influence with each other. Such a division has visible and tangible symptoms but at its core its cause is a spiritual divide.

**Satan's Counter Strategy #2: Secular Authority** - To isolate and alienate a father and mother's emotional and physical relationship with their children. Again, such a division has visible and tangible symptoms but at its core it is a spiritual divide.

**Satan's Counter Strategy #3: Convenient Community** - To isolate and alienate a family's emotional and physical relationship with the Church of Jesus. The symptoms of course are visible and tangible but at their core they absolutely cause a spiritual divide.

## **Organic Definition for the Biblical Family**

Our definition of the family is one that must be rooted and unmovable from the teaching of the bible, and living based on the clear and fluid instructions of Jesus. We believe that the family is based upon the life-long covenant love between a man and a woman. The married couple sustains itself in Christ, and brings forth new members, and provides for the nurturing and care of its innocent, elderly, and sick. We should not accept the various attempts by political, secular or global institutions and influences to redefine the biblical family for us. We believe that the family must be led by men and women seeking to honor God's biblical plan for the family. And when that divine model is not humanly possible, the grace of God will be upon the man or woman who will honor Him and lead the family forward.



## **Foundational Scriptures**

Psalm 92:8-15

**But you, O LORD, will be exalted forever. Your enemies, LORD, will surely perish; all evildoers will be scattered. But you have made me as strong as a wild ox. You have anointed me with the finest oil. My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the defeat of my wicked opponents. But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted to the LORD's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God. Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green. They will declare, "The LORD is just! He is my rock! There is no evil in him!"**

Psalm 40:3-8

**He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the LORD. Oh, the joys of those who trust the LORD, who have no confidence in the proud or in those who worship idols. O LORD my God, you have performed many wonders for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list. You have no equal. If I tried to recite all your wonderful deeds, I would never come to the end of them. You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings. Now that you have made me listen, I finally understand you don't require burnt offerings or sin offerings. Then I said, "Look, I have come. As is written about me in the Scriptures: I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart.**

Joshua 24:14-15

**Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**

ESV

Colossians 3:12-21

**Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together**

**in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.**

**Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.**

Ephesians 5:21-6:4

**And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body. As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and**

**the two are united into one." This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. NLT**

## **Family - God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

### **Origins of the Attack Against the Biblical Family**

**11.29.15 – 12.20.15**

Why do the most deliberate and sustained attacks on the biblical family so often come from the socio-political side of the spectrum? This must be not only acknowledged but spiritually discerned not as the cause but rather the ways and means to the central attack on the family and ultimately the Church of Jesus Christ. We can clearly see the negative influence and pressure impact on the family that comes along with modern consumer capitalism (I want - I want - I want). But that influence and pressure is incidental to the main structures of the market economy. (Stay with Me) By contrast, the most profound and rudimental attacks on the family, including easy divorce, abortion and same sex marriage, gender neutralization, and ethical and moral relativism have come deliberately from socio-political ideologies that subtly yet deliberately marginalized and undermined the biblical worldview and the families who would function in it. The

progressive attack is no longer subtle nor annoying - it is now aggressive and destroying. It has been the angel of light that (fundamentally Christian) nations have entertained and tolerated for fifty years. The age of enlightenment was only a beginning to what we now tragically are experiencing within our homes and families. We did not discern the subversive agenda, or recognize the signs along the way. None bigger than the secular worldview that systematically and persistently eliminated all biblical views and Christian leadership from the public education of our elementary schools, high schools and universities. **We created a leadership vacuum that was filled by educators, politicians, and celebrities who have led the last five generations of our families into agnosticism, secularism, and hedonism. The greatest ideological shift in the history of the world has taken place in the greatest nation of the world in the last fifty years. The shift was in reality a spiritual coup. We gave up our families, and we gave up our children.**



## **In the 60's We Lost Our Innocence**

Philippians 4:8-9

**Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. ESV**

## **In the 70's We Lost Our Inhibitions**

Galatians 5:22-24

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ESV**

## **In the 80's We Lost Our Priorities**

Matthew 6:31-33

**So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear? These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. NLT**

## **In the 90's We Lost Our Influence**

Matthew 5:13-16

**You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine**

**before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. ESV**

## **In the New Millennial We Lost Our Faith**

Romans 1:16-17

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." ESV**

Notice with each decade the losses were spiritual and biblical virtues that represented principles of truth that the family needed to sustain and overcome the attack of the enemy against its fortress of faith. The attack did not start in the church - the attack started in the family. Yet, as we read in Ephesians and Colossians, they are divinely ordered to be woven together and spiritually

interdependent. That is God's perfect plan for imperfect people!

What are you saying about my family Steve? "I am saying that for the last fifty years in this great country, men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers in all reality stopped leading their families to Christ."

My purpose today was to biblically show that the socio-political ideal of equality and separation has played an independent role in the breakdown of the biblical family. These secular ideologies and philosophies have attacked the family directly, and have adopted policies that have led to a demographic collapse of the biblical family.

## **Family - God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

### **Origins of the Attack Against the Biblical Church**

I believe it is paramount that we understand and clearly see why the attack on the family evolves into an attack on the Christian Church and any other religion that defends the family for that matter. To do that I want to spend a little time providing some perspective to where the Church of Jesus Christ in western civilization is today. From there we can talk about the origins of that condition and then finally, I will explain why the biblical Church and biblical family are the greatest threat to the socio-political ideals being used by Satan. I will make claim that they are a greater threat against the present day socio-political agenda than any nation, government, or world leader precisely because the biblical family and biblical Church offer the ultimate solution to the very problems they claim to solve. Jesus said to His disciple who would become the first leaders of the biblical Christian Church...

John 16:31-33

**"Do you finally believe? But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."**

Those words though spoken two thousand years ago directly to His disciples were intended for all (regardless of time or place) who would proclaim the gospel and lead family or Church towards Christ and His Kingdom. Listen to Jesus as He warns His disciples and leaders from all times and places again...

Matthew 24:9-14

**"You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many**

people. Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come."

The biblical Church had historically recognized that the world's economy and values were subject to excesses - that is why Jesus taught moderation and humility. The biblical Church was a compass for virtues and values. The biblical Church should (in a true spirit of love) biblically speak out in wisdom for balanced or moderate materialism and consumerism, without denying the legitimate rights of private property, entrepreneurship and enterprise. It should speak the truth against **unbiblical equality** as one of the great socio-political Idols of our time. \*The Christian mission to "defend the weak, and make disciples" can and does achieve many of the virtues that made "create equality" so appealing as a socio-political cause.

1 Corinthians 9:21-23

**When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.**

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

**Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other. Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. See that no one**



**pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.**

But above all, the vision of the biblical Church must respect the biblical family as the great (pre) socio-political institution, and should defend biblical marriage as the most basic unit of social cooperation. For the family truly is the "God designed" cradle of any civilization, because it shapes the next generation and transmits the culture's values to them - this is God's perfect plan for imperfect people. The biblical family is certainly the biblical cultivator of love, which is the culture and civilization the biblical Church must defend and promote. Somewhere in the last fifty years the Church stopped doing what God had asked the Church to do. How could that happen? Simply... the Church misplaced its bible and lost its voice. It was then that the Church lost its place of influence and respect in Western culture. Instead of defending the weak as Jesus did, it seems that we now focus our Church mission more around exploiting the weak, to

manipulate the strong. Take a moment... I know that stings - it did for me too. Jesus warned that this type of misguided mission would occur - the attack would come. That is why He was so specific about what the mission should be, and how we should stay the course.

There are many biblical warnings and prophetic insights that direct us to the very spiritual attacks on the biblical church and family. Those warnings are not all assigned to the historical Church and the distant past - many represent our present day, and current circumstance. Unfortunately the leaders of the biblical Church in the western world have failed to stay connected to the biblical model and mission for the Church of Jesus Christ. The last fifty years have been disheartening as the Christian Church has struggled to maintain a semblance of the biblical Church of Jesus Christ. The Church meant to be the spiritual body of Christ has self-inflicted wounds, amputations, internal tensions and conflicts, rebellions, defiance, gross self-indulgences. And though we know that the Church of Jesus is not a perfect place we have always maintained hope in that

we were reaching for perfection in Christ - and that process sustained and moved us forward. The last fifty years this has not been so. Though there has always been a spiritual attack on the Church from the outside there has never been from the inside such deceptively shallow and heretical theology; a (pick what you like) theology that has gone far beyond the seeds of Gnosticism and legalism of the early church. There has never been such a time of biblical illiteracy, polarized sense of mission, lack of influence and purpose for the Church, nor such an appetite for material or commercial success. It is worse now than ever because there is no ethical or personal conviction towards biblical accountability, or sense of self-governing. The Church has lost our biblical compass, our spiritual purpose, and subsequently our ability to lead our people against spiritual darkness and deception. It is as if the Church of Jesus has forgotten who we are and what our name is. That it's more important for the Church in western civilization now than ever has been.

Church we have been called by His name. He has called us His body. He has called us His children, His sons, His daughters; He has called us His heirs and joint heirs, His friends and His disciples. When I was a kid growing up in the Church we used to sing from the hymnal...

**There's a new name written down in glory - and it's mine  
o yes it's mine. With my sins forgiven I am bound for heaven, never more to roam.**

The authority to name is God's, and He gives the special grace and authority to the family and to the Church needed to continue on and to carry out this mission as did Adam [Genesis 2:19-20], as did the angel who wrestled with Jacob [Genesis 32:27-28], as did Jesus with Peter [Mark 3], as did God with Paul [Acts 13:9]. Throughout ancient biblical history to the incarnation and coming of Jesus all the way through to our present day, renaming is the mission God, in Christ. (Matthew 25:31-46)

It is the mission and message of the family and of the Church - and by the faithfulness of God we are going

to remember who He named us and who He has called us to be. And when we remember that then we will bring hope and a new name to the hurt, hated and hostile. Here is some final insight today written by Apostle John, the who lived longer and saw more than any of the original disciples...

1 John 2:18-27

**Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.**

**But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth. So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference**

**between truth and lies. And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist.**

**Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.**

**So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father. And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us.**

**I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray. But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.**

**12.27.15**

**Family - God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

**Husbands and Wives - Sacred Union (Part One)**

Any examination of the sacred union of marriage and the role of men and women in God's design must begin with a faith-believing understanding of Genesis 1—3. The key verses in those chapters provide us the creational foundation for the context of God's intentions and designs for the sacred union between a man and a woman, which we call marriage.

**Designed in God's Image**

Genesis 1:27–28

**God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

Notice two important things in that account. **First**, God created both man and woman in His image. Not just man, but woman also was made in God's image. Like God, each has a rational but distinctive personality. Men and women alike possess intellect, emotion, and will, by which they are able to think, feel, and choose. Humanity was not, however, created in God's image as creatures unable to sin. Nor were man and woman created in "His image" essentially. They/we have never possessed God's supernatural attributes, such as omniscience, omnipotence, immutability, or omnipresence. People are only human, yet God made us with a soul which is eternal - and He was pleased. Author J. David Pawson reminded us that the male-female equality of creation in God's image also "does not mean interchangeability. An engine's cylinder head and crankcase may be of the same material, size, weight, and cost—but they cannot be exchanged. **Second**, God blessed them as man and woman in verse 28:

**God said to them, be fruitful and multiply ... fill the earth ... subdue it; and rule.**



The man and woman were coregents (rule and authority held by two people): God gave both Adam and Eve the task to rule together over the lower creation.

### **The Perfect Relationship - Sacred Union**

Genesis 2:7 describes the creation of man in greater detail:

**The LORD God formed man of dust from the ground,  
and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man  
became a living being.**

This verse is vital to our discussion, because it states that God created man first and in a significantly different manner than woman. Genesis 2:18–23 expands on 1:27–28, adding some significant details in the process. After placing man in the garden of Eden and commanding him to cultivate it and not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (2:15–18),

**God said, it is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.**

So He created Eve to assist Adam in ruling an undefiled world (verses 21-22):

**The LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.**

Upon meeting his wife, awestruck Adam declared (verse 23),

**This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.**

Immediately Adam recognized her as his perfect companion. He saw no blemishes or shortcomings in her, because both her character and his attitude were pure.

There was nothing to criticize in Eve, and there was no critical spirit in Adam.

The chapter concludes (verses 24-25),

**For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. They were unashamed because no evil, impure, or perverse thoughts could exist in their perfect state.**

It is here (in the beginning) that God's design for a husband and wife is revealed, and the sacred union of marriage held fast by the biblical Church and family found its origin. A husband (male) - a wife (female) united in divine covenant (for as long as they both should live) was pleasing, planned, and intended by God. Everything outside of that ideology is different and not the same. Yes, there is divorce and forgiveness – yes, there is single-parenting with favor and special graces given - and yes, there are circumstances

beyond human control and reason, left to be judged mercifully, justly, and in a capable love only known to God. Yet since the time of creation, and from the first human creatures (one man and one woman), the order and plan was for an undissolved union between that man and that woman. Beyond that plan, we know that God our Creator loves everyone - but we know with certainty He does not agree with all of us.

As biblical families, and biblical churches we find ourselves with a historically unique opportunity to embrace, deepen and stand for biblically spiritual truths. We stand as individuals, as families, and as the Church of Jesus Christ against any or all socio-political ideologies that contradict or present themselves aggressively against God's truth and divine intentions for sacred union between man and a woman. We stand first in resolution within the love of Christ to defend our families and churches in a Christ-like manner without hatred, hurt and hostility. But we remain resolved to defend and not attack for our right to practice, believe, what God has given to us.

### 1.3.16

## Family - God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth

### Husbands and Wives (Part Two)

#### Together We Stand, Divided We...

Luke 11:17-18

**Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. ESV**

It wouldn't necessarily take a genius to figure out that the wisdom and the inspiration for the saying... "together we stand divided we fall" came to the originator as inspiration from the words of Jesus. In the gospels Jesus also said **"a husband and wife are no longer two but one flesh."** And then He added... **"so what God has joined together, let not man separate."**

If Satan (the enemy of marriage) cannot persuade men/husband's to deny or disregard God's Word, he will try to entice or deceive them into misinterpreting it and then to either ignore it altogether or carry it to extremes the Lord never intended. So that husbands/men would not abuse

their authority over wives/women, Paul reminded them of their equality and mutual dependence:

1 Corinthians 11:11-12

**In the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.**

A husband's leadership and authority with his wife is delegated as a grace to him by God. This grace is to be to be used for God's purposes, with His heart, and in His way. As a fellow creature, man has no innate superiority to a woman and no right to use his authority tyrannically or selfishly. Male chauvinism is no more biblical than feminism. Both are perversions of God's plan.

Galatians 3:28

**There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ESV**

Here it is... All believers, whether male or female, are in the Lord and as one in Him. The roles of course differ in function, but certainly not in spirituality or importance. That's why Paul said, "Neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman." Men and women are complementary in every way, but particularly in spiritual leadership and in the Lord's work do they function together as a divinely "ordained team.

Husbands and wives serve each other, and they serve with each other. A husband's proper authority does not make him independent of his wife, nor does a wife's proper subordination make her alone dependent. Neither a husband or wife are independent of the other. According to the biblical model they are mutually dependent or interdependent on one another.

God created the first woman from the man, but since that time every man is born through a woman. That is God's wise and gracious balance and truth.

1 Corinthians 11:12

**Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. ESV**

While women in most biblical examples were not teachers of men, they were usually the most influential shapers of men. Bearing and nurturing children should eliminate any thought of a lower status than men for all women. As mothers they have an indispensable role in training and developing a future generation of men. From conception to adulthood a man should have an emotional connection with his mother in a unique and healthy way. And throughout adulthood, whether married or single, we men are dependent on women in more ways than we often are willing to acknowledge. According to the scripture (in marriage) men cannot be faithful to the Lord unless they are willingly and lovingly dependent on the wife that God has given them. In leading our families, the way God has planned men cannot be faithful to that calling and to its grace and authority unless we have a spiritual dependence



on the women to whom He has given responsibility in His church. Together they are perfect complements—one the head, leader, and provider; the other the helper, encourager, and equal companion. That is God's perfect biblical plan for imperfect biblical men and women in biblical marriage. Together is His plan. Grace, Love, Mercy and Forgiveness are also a part of His perfect plan for imperfect people. But it is critically important for each husband and wife to commit everything to standing together for the best that God has for us.

There are many biblical reasons that God has given us as husbands and wives to stand together and to stay together. Next week we will discuss the seven biblical reasons husbands and wives must stand together... this will be very strong and significant.

**1.10.16**

**Family - God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

**Husbands and Wives (Part Three )**

**Together We Stand, Divided We...**

**Seven Biblical Reasons Why Husbands and Wives  
Should Stand and Stay Together (Physically-Spiritually-  
Emotionally)**

**One - Companionship**

Biblical marriage or sacred union provides the foundation for companionship and spiritually healthy interpersonal relationship. How can a husband or wife enjoy this very specific and God designed companionship when the spouse is not there? To fill up the vacuum created by absence and disinterest men and women who are not surrendered to Christ have used many unhealthy distractions and provisional replacements. Most often this only widens the distance and deepens the resentment for both husbands and wives. This was not God's plan... You got married because you wanted to spend the rest of your life

with your spouse. Have friends, have hobbies, have interests! but do not have friends, hobbies, and interests that steal the best you have to offer to your husband or wife.

Mark 10:6-8

**But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. ESV**

## **Two - Joint Decisions**

Technology has made it a bit easier for married couples to communicate with one another but it cannot and must not replace one-on-one face-to-face discussion and dialogue. When apart physically, spiritually, and emotionally, husbands and wives tend to make decisions without considering and consulting the other and when they do, the other may just agree or disagree without understanding the situation or its negative impact towards God's plan for

standing and staying together. You will hear this again in moment, but praying for and with one another is God's plan for stimulating and opening the door for healthy discussion and dialogue in our marriages.

1 Peter 3:1-12

**In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives. Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.**

**In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.**

**Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will bless you for it. For the Scriptures say,**

**"If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil." ESV**

### **Three - Love and Care**

Everyone desires to be loved and cared for by someone other than themselves - and everyone needs to love and care for someone other than themselves. This too is God's plan. How will you be loved and cared for when your spouse is not around? Hearing him say he loves you over the phone is not the same as when he looks into your eyes and says it and the expression on his face showing how much he cares for you. What of the touch that is impossible with distance? How will you care for or comfort your spouse when he/she is down emotionally or sick if you are physically, spiritually, or emotionally far away. Distance creates disconnect and is a big barrier for married couples who desperately need to love and care for one another. Attentiveness, healthy concern, sincere interest, mutual support are all practical and biblical ways to show the love and care needed to stand and stay together. Consistently praying for and with one another is God's plan for eliminating physical, spiritual, and emotional distance and disconnect.

Ephesians 5:22-33

**Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.**

**Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.**

**However, let each one of you love his wife as himself,  
and let the wife see that she respects her husband. ESV**

#### **Four - Marital Infidelity**

It is easier for married people to become unfaithful to their spouses if they are not standing and staying together physically, spiritually and emotionally. The temptations become increasingly stronger to find something or someone else to meet the unmet needs, and over extended periods of time the strength and wisdom to resist that kind of temptation becomes more difficult to find. Exposing our spouses to this kind temptation is very dangerous and is not biblical or good relationship advice. This is not God's plan. It will eventually threaten the marriage in unhealthy and destructive ways.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

**The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights,  
and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does  
not have authority over her own body, but the husband**



**does. Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ESV**

## **Five - Raising Children**

Except for some of the extreme circumstances and behaviors pre-mentioned biblical marriages and biblical couples should stand and stay together for the well-being of their children and to fulfill their God given role and graces for raising and training their children. Of course God's plan is that every child to grows and is nurtured under the care of both parents - both for love and discipline whether parents are divorced or married. Many children who grow up under single parents tend to be emotionally imbalanced and missing important gender specific character traits and experiences. Strangely it is often times easier for them if the parent is deceased rather than when they know he/she is

around somewhere but seemingly not interested in nurturing or being involved in parenting them.

Mark 10:14-16

**Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. ESV**

Ephesians 6:4

**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. ESV**

Titus 2:1-9

**But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled,**

**pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. ESV**

## **Six - Unhealthy Independence**

When there is extended physical, spiritual, and emotional distance eventually spouses tend to become too independent of each other to stand and stay together. That is Satan's plan. Often times in desperation to save a marriage and when there finally becomes enough concern and effort to come together, far too many discover that they have become strongly set in their ways and have developed behaviors and lifestyles that are no longer complimentary or compatible for being together. Satan (the enemy of all biblical marriage and union) knows that it

becomes almost impossible to adjust or readjust to an interdependent setting that requires accountability, responsibility, and flexibility to succeed. When the distance of physical, spiritual, and emotional togetherness has become too long or inconsistent, biblical roles and relationships start to seem unneeded - loving partnerships and marital teamwork have been undermined, compromised and replaced by secular and ungodly instincts for personal survival and self-centeredness. The wife now finds it difficult and unreasonable to submit or listen to her husband's leadership - and she thinks why should she? Meanwhile the husband finds the wife's efforts annoying and invasive as she tries to become caring and interested in what he has long considered his business. God's plan is for marital interdependence - work towards that end and God will give you favor and grace.

1 Corinthians 11:12

**Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. ESV**

## **Seven - Fulfilling God's Commandment**

Again we hear... A man should leave his father and his mother, and should be joined to his wife. God desiring to relieve us of any heartache commanded that married couples should stand together and stay together - physically, spiritually, and emotionally. In order to do this biblically and rightfully, both husband and wife must be committed to their relationship with God and with one another above everyone and anything in their life. First - Find ways to pray together. We all know that praying for one another is important and effective, but praying with one another is truly the heart of God on this one. Praying together in person is optimal but that isn't quite possible every day and we all know it. So, be creative and obedient! Pray together by phone, by text, and by whatever means available when face to face is not possible. Second - Find ways to serve one another. Sit down together and ask what these services might be one physical, one spiritual, and one emotional. In doing so, we begin to meet the all important physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of the person we have confessed that we love more than anyone in the

world. Third - Find ways to serve others together. This will cause both husband and wife to connect together physically, spiritually, and emotionally. This deep connection opens hearts and minds to both love and intimacy, which will certainly strengthen the resolve to stand and stay together as husband and wife in all things. And as most know by experience that is just the start - but is certainly is where you must start. Obeying God is the biblical essential to enjoying your marriage and a successful life together. Of course we know that due to some very real and necessary circumstances couples cannot help living or being apart physically from one another at times. But God's plan for husbands and wives standing together and staying together goes far beyond just a physical proximity or time spent. This is also intended for husbands and wives as spiritual soulmates and emotional confidants. That is God's plan. Jesus asked His disciples at a critical time near the end of His physical life and time with them...

Luke 22:46

**Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation. ESV**

How important is it to avoid falling into our temptations in our marriages? How hard is it to stand and stay together physically, spiritually, and emotionally when we have already fallen to our temptations? That is why Jesus told His disciples to pray together. All of us have underestimated the power and success that directly comes from that spiritual dynamic of agreeing together in faith and purpose at the beginning or in a strategic time of our day as husbands and wives. I know it is frustrating to be reminded of this - but we must be reminded of this. This agreement in prayer sets our spiritual defenses against the forces of evil that threaten to come against our marriage and family - it is a covering and grace given by God.

Look beyond the moment to the future, and then as a husband and wife make a mutual and non-negotiable decisions to stand and stay together physically, spiritually, and emotionally. And then see how God's perfect plan for imperfect marriages can bring the kind of joy and fulfillment we all seek and need.

Isaiah 54:14-17

**In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you. If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. ESV**



**1.31.16**

**Family - God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

**Husbands and Wives (Conclusion)**

The things I appreciate and that are most memorable in my life were never just handed to me, or simply came easy for me. Those memorable achievements and accomplishments have always come through some adversity or difficulty and even struggle. There is great personal strength in knowing that I put in the work and made the sacrifice necessary to reach the goal and to become successful. My character and inner strength were built in those dark and discouraging times when I would go back and forth between myself and God wanting to quit, but knowing I should not and that I could not. I reasoned with myself and with God that life should not be this hard - marriage, parenting, pastoring, relationships, and even faith itself just should not be so hard... right? I argued, all the time knowing the truth. The truth that Jesus spoke not to me but directly for me...

**Hey Steve, in this world you will have trouble, but don't be afraid of it, because I have overcome the world.**

Or I would hear Him say....

**Steve you are being selfish, 'deny your selfishness, and take up your cross and just follow Me.'**

Of course the dialogue would never stop there. There were always those very personal moments of truth that would follow as a result of processing the original truth. I guess you can call that unending or eternal truth. Nonetheless, I can only describe it as the Jesus Voice, or a Holy Spirit Text Message. It would always say something like...

**You know Steve, I had a cross, and now you have a cross. In fact, if you recall Steve, I died on my cross for you. And just so you know, moving forward parts of you are going to die on your cross as well - go ahead and get over it, you'll live, I've made sure of that. And Steve, trust me when I say from personal experience that everyone you love will be better because of it.**

The truth is God created us in such a way that we need “the struggle” to stay fully alive. The challenge of life struggle is what keeps us sharp, sound, and relevant - human. But for the struggle to be profitable, it must have purpose, and then we must learn from the struggle for it become productive. Two people who do nothing but fight in their marriage and make each other miserable are not engaging in a helpful or profitable spiritual struggle – there is no purpose or value in that kind of behavior. It's only when we put relationship struggle within the Christian and biblical context of character development and self-sacrifice that it becomes profitable and useful.

Nobody leaves his or her family or marriage because it's too easy. The tendency to run from or avoid difficulty and struggle is a serious spiritual failing, and a character flaw that can and often does keep us in in what amounts to Christian day care (as immature children). The great spiritual writers (because Jesus did) warned that this life is difficult and that we should use the difficulty to be built up in our

personal character and human resolve. William Law, an eighteenth-century Anglican writer, asks,

“How many saints has adversity sent to Heaven? And how many poor sinners has prosperity plunged into everlasting misery?”

John Climacus, who wrote the Eastern classic on the Christian faith in the fifth century, mocks our demand to have it easy and to shun struggle when he wrote:

“I would not consider any spirituality worthwhile that wants to walk in sweetness and ease and run from the imitation of Christ.”

Jesus promised us that everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt (Mark 9:49). The desire for ease, comfort, and stress-free living is an indirect and subconscious desire to remain an “unseasoned,” immature Christian.

Now don't get angry and leave me hanging here - stay with me.

**Struggle makes us stronger; it builds us up and deepens our faith. But this positive result is achieved only when we face the struggle head-on, and not when we run from it.**

Let's consider that Jesus portrayed struggle as the entry point into the Christian life, stressing that it would be a daily reality of our faith:

Luke 9:23

**If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.**

To many Western Christians, this verse might sound like old-school drama, but when I look at my life honestly, I have to admit that in many ways I have it fairly easy. I am not ridiculed or persecuted for my faith—in fact, as a Christ follower, husband and father, pastor, coach, writer and teacher, my faith has the peripheral and favorable effect of supporting and strengthening my family and community.

The relative ease of life as a Christian is a benefit experienced by very few generations before us. Medicine has become so advanced that many of us can live virtually pain-free lives, or at the very least in pain managed lives. We have machines to wash, steam, and sanitize our clothes, to wash, sanitize, and dry the dishes. We have luxury cars with climate control, cruise control, GPS, media centers that move us in complete comfort at 70 MPH from one place to the next. I can wake up in Phoenix and have dinner in Manhattan in that same evening. We have it easy enough that we can begin to be lulled to sleep, thinking that life should be easy or that it will always be easy. Once it gets a little difficult, we tend to become consumed with trying to make our lives comfortable again. Jesus was teaching that in doing so, we miss a great spiritual opportunity to become who we need to be as man or woman – husband or wife – father or mother.

Our marriages and family relationships can be looked at the same way. Instead of immediately thinking about how we can take a chairlift to the top, we might take a hiker's

approach and think, “This is really tough. This is a challenge, no doubt about it. How do I keep loving this person, and how do they keep loving me in the face of this challenge?” Thomas à Kempis noted that

“the more the flesh is wasted by affliction, so much the more is the spirit strengthened by inward grace. And sometimes he is so comforted with desire of tribulation and adversity, for the love of conformity to the cross of Christ, that he would not wish to be without grief or tribulation.”

Ask yourself these two questions:

**Would I rather live a life of relative ease and comfort, only to remain immature, weak, and not who I need to be in Christ?**

**Am I willing to be seasoned and strengthened with suffering if by doing so I am conformed to the image of Christ?**

It is unrealistic to assume that the initial pledge of marital fidelity will be an “easy” one to keep. Otto Piper points out

“there is always an element of mistrust implied in the marriage contract.”

The reason we promise to love each other “till death do us part” is precisely because our society knows that such a promise is not really a real promise—otherwise, the promise wouldn’t be necessary! We don’t make public promises that we will regularly nourish our bodies with food or buy ourselves adequate clothing.

Everyone who enters the marriage relationship will come to a point where the marriage starts to “rub” somewhat adversely. It is for these times that the promise of fidelity is made. Anticipating struggle, God has ordained a remedy, holding us to our word of commitment.

In this struggle we become better people. One of the great challenges we encounter as we encourage Christians to grow is that we are obsessed with raising children who need to be taught and mentored into success and greatness, while we assume that our own characters are fully



developed in success and greatness. They're not. There are numerous areas in which both you and I can continue to grow. Nobility, sacrifice, and unselfishness are just a few.

Without degenerating into becoming a masochist, the mature Christian recognizes and appreciates the sweet and strengthening side of suffering. Teresa of Avila wrote,

“Lord, how you afflict your lovers! But everything is small in comparison to what you give them afterward.”

This is the same reality that was experienced by John Climacus, who centuries before Teresa wrote,

“If individuals resolutely submit to the carrying of the cross, if they decidedly want to find and endure trial in all things for God, they will discover in all of them great relief and sweetness.”

This teaching simply mirrors the apostle Paul's words...

2 Corinthians 4:17:

**For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.**

Because we have hope for eternity, we do not become nearsighted, demanding short-term ease “that would short-circuit long-term gain. Our demands for comfort and ease show us what we truly value. It is the definitive demonstration of whether we are living for God’s kingdom and service or for our own comfort and reputation. An MMA champion who dodges all serious contenders to consistently fight lesser opponents is not respected and ridiculed—and rightly so. When we as Christians dodge all serious struggle and consciously seek to put ourselves in whatever situations and relationships that are easier are doing the same thing—we are coasting, and eventually that coasting will cost us and the people we love. It will weaken us, define us and—even worse—destroy us and the ones that we care about most. If there is one thing young engaged couples need to hear, it’s that a good marriage is not something you find, it’s something you work for. It takes struggle. We must die to our

selfishness. We must at times confront, and at other times confess. The practice of forgiveness is essential.

This is undeniably hard work! But eventually it pays off. Eventually, it creates a relationship of beauty, trust, and mutual support. It helps when we view our “struggles in light of what they provide for us spiritually rather than in light of what they take from us emotionally. Working through disagreements is taxing and demanding. There are a million things I’d rather do than put in the time and effort to leap over another relational hurdle. If I’m in my marriage for emotional stability, I probably won’t last long. But if I think it can reap spiritual benefits, I’ll have plenty of reason to not just be married, but act married and to stay married.

If family and marriage are a disillusioning experience for many people, the reason is likely to be found in the passivity and lacking of their faith. People dislike the fact that the blessings of God may only be found and enjoyed when they are persistently sought (Matthew 7:7). So then our families and our marriages are both a gift to be received and a task to be accomplished.

Let's not run from the struggles of our families and marriage. Let's embrace them and grow in them. Let's come closer to God because of them. Through our shared family and marriage struggles we will reflect more of the spirit and heart of Jesus Christ. And thank God that he has placed us in a situation (struggle) where our spirits can be strengthened and perfected.

**2.7.16 / 2.14.16**

**Family - God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

**Fathers: Men to Boys – Boys to Men**

Deuteronomy 32:46-47

**Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. ESV**

I read about an actual occurrence at a High School Assembly for military recruitment (they no longer allow those anymore by the way), Three military recruiters addressed the senior class of boys. With graduation only a few months away, the principal wanted his two hundred young men to hear the options available in the military. The assembly was to be forty-five minutes in length. It was agreed that each recruiter would have fifteen minutes to make his pitch and then have another twenty minutes in the cafeteria to meet

with interested boys. The Army recruiter went first and got so excited about his speech that he went over twenty minutes. The Navy recruiter, not to be outdone, stood up and also spoke passionately for twenty minutes.

The Marine Corps recruiter, realizing that his fifteen-minute speech had been cut to two, walked up to the podium and spent the first sixty seconds in silence. Wordlessly, he gazed over the group of high school seniors. They knew he was sizing them up. After what seemed to be an eternity, the recruiter said, "I doubt whether there are two or three of you in this room who could cut it as marines. I want to see those three men as soon as this assembly is over."

No disrespect to the Armed Services but the whole one good man thing is not new or unique to the military. According to the Bible one good man can and has made a difference in this world and the world to come since the beginning. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Paul... the list is long. The same is true outside of biblical history. Let me give you an example of how one good man can make a difference.

Jonathan Edwards was one man who made a difference. Born in 1703, he was perhaps the most brilliant mind America ever produced. A pastor, writer, and later, president of Princeton, he and his wife had eleven children. Of his known male descendants:

- More than three hundred became pastors, missionaries, or theological professors.
- 120 were professors at various universities.
- 110 became attorneys.
- Sixty were prominent authors.
- Thirty were judges.
- Fourteen served as presidents of universities and colleges.
- Three served in the U.S. Congress.
- One became vice-president of the United States.

Jonathan Edwards made a difference because he saved his boys. And his boys saved their boys and those boys grew up to save their boys. Generation after generation, the boys were saved. He was just one man, but he positively affected

hundreds and even thousands of his descendants after his death.

Although Edwards was known for his daily regimen of thirteen hours in the study—and despite his busy schedule of teaching, writing, and pastoring—he made it a habit to come home and spend one hour each day with his children. Edwards was one of the great minds of history. Yet, this world-class scholar had his priorities and values placed in the leadership and influence of his sons.

Years ago I heard a joke going around about real men. Do you know how many real men it takes to change a light bulb? None. Real men aren't afraid of the dark. It seemed like a funny and cool joke then - not so much now. Most men don't know how to change a light bulb anymore. And therein lies the real joke about men. It is more a sad joke than a funny one. Because today I believe that real men are endangered in our world. I'm not talking about John Wayne, the Marlborough Man, the Six Million Dollar Man, Anchor Man, Iron Man, Millennial man or transgender man. I



am talking about every man. Men our crisis is real - the problem is not cultural, societal, or economical. It is spiritual.

This particular subtitle men to boys and boys to men is not a cute play on 80's and 90's "boy bands." As a retro theme it definitely works, but that was not the intent or the message for this teaching. The message is this...

**"We must be men to our boys, so that our boys can become men."**

The "becoming a man phenomenon" of our day is not another social issue or cultural concern that we simply identify and then ignore. It is however a biblically principled spiritual struggle for the present day male gender - both for the Christian and non-Christian alike!

I don't want to paint broad strokes here. I want you to know that I am both prepared mentally and spiritually for this content, and am extremely passionate about communicating and providing solutions and direction for those men and women who want to do something about it.

I heard the saying many years ago at Promise Keeper's men's conference... "real men save their boys." I think they were passing out bumper stickers with the quote on them. I like the saying and the thought behind it. But as you and I know talk and bumper stickers are both cheap unless the man behind the words, and the car behind the sticker can deliver the goods. There is a lot of blood, sweat, prayer, and tears behind delivering on words like, "real men save their boys." I don't want just words - I want to deliver the goods to my sons so that they can actually become the men I want them to be.

So over the next couple of weeks I want to identify some of the obvious challenges and circumstances surrounding the struggle. Then I will counter challenge with a biblical remedy or direction for each challenge listed.

**CHALLENGE ONE:** Fathers, we have a limited amount of actual time with our sons.

**RESOLUTION ONE:** Fathers, develop and maintain an emotional and spiritual bond. We do this by:

1. Embracing the call of God to lead your son.
2. Time committed to the transference of faith to your son.
3. Giving intentional and extraordinary effort to your son.
4. Teaching biblical and spiritual truth to your son.
5. Love your son openly, correct him privately.
6. Listen and learn about who your son is.
7. Create hope by sharing your vision to lead the family.

**CHALLENGE TWO:** Fathers, we have a fear of speaking the truth to our sons, because we have not lived our lives in a way that allows us to be courageous.

**RESOLUTION TWO:** Fathers, repent to your son and confess not only your own spiritual failures and temptation to sin, but more importantly your desire to please God. Then begin the daily process of living courageously, passionately, and speaking the truth over the life of your son. We do this by:

- 1. Repentance:** In spite of your knowledge of God's forgiveness and grace, humble yourself and repent to God for the sin in your life.
- 2. Correction:** Find what kind of father God wants you to be - become that man, no matter what others think or say.
- 3. Action:** Each day intentionally target one of God's expectations for speaking and living the truth. Live in that truth and share that with your son.
- 4. Action:** Include your son in those things that you are passionate about, to create teachable moments and shared experiences.

**CHALLENGE THREE:** Fathers, our sons seek personal identity and your approval. This is how God made him.

**RESOLUTION THREE:** Fathers, tell your son the stories of your journey and faith and why it is important for both you and him to be who God made you to be. We do this by:

1. **Sharing the stories of your life's successes and failures - the consequences and the rewards. Light the path to how you got to where you are.**
2. **Tell your son what you value most and why.**
3. **Explain to your son the difference between beliefs and opinions. Then tell him why it is important to stand for what you believe, and why you keep your opinions to yourself unless asked.**
4. **Show your son every day how to value and love a woman by how you value and love his mother.**
5. **Show up when he needs you to show up - stay away when you need to stay away. Don't tell your son how great he is - tell him how proud you are that he is.**

**6. Let your son see your joy, and make sure he knows that he is the reason for it.**

Jeremiah 31:29

**The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. ESV**

Malachi 4:5-6

**Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.**

Ephesians 6:4

**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.**

**2.28.16 – 3.6.16**

**Family - God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

**Fathers: Hold Me Daddy!**

**template [noun];** model, example, guide, mold, blueprint, pattern

Here is a reality check for all of us fathers with daughters. You and I are a template for all male figures who will become part of our daughter's life - her teachers, mentors and coaches, her boyfriends, her husband, and even God himself. Because we are there from her earliest years, we set a template and an expectation dynamic over our daughter's mind and heart regarding how she will interact with, and relate to all males. Does that get your attention and interest? It does mine.

**For example:**

**If we are kind, she will expect all males to be kind.**

**If we are harsh and critical, then she will believe that all other men are supposed to be critical and harsh with her.**

**If we are distant and emotionally unavailable then she will expect the same from the future men in her life.**

**If we are tender and loving she will look for that same virtue from the man or men she loves. If we have deep faith in God, and make relationship with Christ a life priority, then she will desire and expect that same spiritual leadership in her important men.**

Most of us who have daughters know the truth, and have experienced (good and bad) first-hand evidence about being a template in our daughters' lives. However, here is a twist to that evidence that we might not have considered. Dr. Meg Meeker a nationally acclaimed pediatrician, author, and co-host for James Dobson's Family Talk Radio introduced this evidence in her book Strong Fathers - Strong Daughters. Dr. Meeker asks...



**How is your wife or girlfriend relating to you?**

**Does she have difficulty trusting you without good reason?**

**Does she ever get angry with you over things that you didn't do?**

Meeker goes on...

"If the answer is yes, you may have a direct link with her father / daughter learned responses and expectations. In other words this may be more about her dad than her. The truth is, because daughters watch their dads so intensely, they learn about maleness and masculinity from you. They don't just watch how you treat them; they watch how you treat their mothers. One of the best gifts that a father can give his daughter is to treat her mother with respect and love. Your daughter gets clues about how her husband should treat her."

Based on this kind of evidence sound like it is time to wake up on this one - be very careful how you treat the mother of daddy's little girl.

**Fathers, if you have a strong marriage, show your daughter's mother affection.** If you have a rocky one, continue to take the high road. Don't criticize her mother in front of her and most certainly, get your anger under control. Angry men are terrifying to daughters. You can show love to her, but if she sees your anger erupt at her mother she will be frightened of you nonetheless.

**Father's if your marriage to your daughter's mother has failed and you are divorced, then show her kindness and respect as the mother of your daughter.** Even if the divorce has been difficult, and her mother is pitting your daughter against you – show her kindness and respect her as the mother of your daughter. Of course that requires hard work, emotional discipline, and at times biting your tongue. Be courageous, insist on being respectful toward her mother. In doing so, you do your daughter an enormous and life-

changing service. You teach her that even when men are under duress, she should expect them to treat her well.

**Here's what you need to know:** Daughters always return to what is right and good. If you keep your wits about you and act like a good, loving man, refusing to get caught up in the war of words with her mother, your little girl will come back to you. Maybe she will be distant as a teenager, but when she matures and enters her adult years, she will be drawn back to your integrity and want a relationship with you - so hold on.

Over the next two Weeks we will share ten biblically inspired principles that will equip fathers in the all important role as daddy to their daughters.

### **One - You Are the Most Important Man in Her Life**

You and I are the filter through which our daughter processes her beliefs about all other men, even God. Men are needed - good men are needed even more. Mothers, daughters, and sisters—need our help to raise healthy young women. Every ounce of masculine courage, godly

wisdom, and wit you own, is needed because fathers, more than anyone else, set the course for a daughter's life.

Your daughter needs the best of who you are: your strength, your courage, your intelligence, and your fearlessness. She needs your empathy, assertiveness, and self-confidence.

Bottom line she needs you.

Our daughters need the support that only fathers can provide—and if you and I are willing to guide our daughters, to stand between her and a toxic culture, to take her to a healthier and Christ-like place, the rewards will be unmatched. We will experience the love and adoration that can come only from a daughter.

- **Are we building and protecting a good reputation as a man for our daughter – one that will help her have a healthy view of men?**
- **Is our speech and words encouraging or critical, and is the tone and intent loving yet decisive?**
- **Are we present spiritually, emotionally, and physically - are we close and not far away?**

## **Two - She Needs Us to be Her Hero**

Each of us as a father leads our daughters somewhere. It is important to know how and where we are leading our daughters. God will give us grace if we are faithful. Don't focus on doing something heroic - focus on godly and strong leadership. Our loving, godly, and strong leadership will automatically make us her hero. Being her hero does not make us perfect or above failure. Being her hero means that at the end of every day she knows her daddy will do the right things – and then get up the next day and do the same. That is how a father becomes and remains his daughter's hero.

- **How do you model courage and tenacity your daughter?**
- **How do you model trustworthiness and honesty for her?**
- **Are you man enough to admit to her when you are wrong, and courageous enough to commit to her to do what is right?**

### **Three - You Are the First Man She Loved**

This is powerful so listen closely. Our daughter's experience with loving and being loved starts with us. We must be there for her first - unavailable and too busy are not good enough. That is a challenge but we know that if our heart is right before God, then grace will follow to make her the priority that He has intended. Every man who enters her life will be compared to you. Her opinions about loving relationships are being formed now.

- **Does our daughter know how and why that we love her?**
- **In what ways can we love and lead our daughter's?**

### **Four - We Must Model Humility to Teach Humility**

Humility in our culture is odd and exceptional - almost lost. But Christ has given us an eternal example of what true and sincere humility can do to influence and lead those that we love. This must be taught to our daughter's. Humility begins and ends in service to others and then to her. This will teach her about who you are and she will observe (because she is always watching you), she will admire, and she will

duplicate your heart for serving. Once the heart and love for serving is in place humility will always follow.

- **Are we serving others in a way that can truly lead and influence not only daughters but all of those around us?**
- **Do we perceive our self as better than we are, or do we value others as much as we do ourselves?**

### **Five - Protect Her Innocence and Defend Her Honor**

Our liberal Hip-Hop celebrity culture trains our daughters for a life of promiscuity void of biblical value or virtue. If we as fathers do not want our daughter's to be sexually active in junior high and high school, we speak and pray this into her life. It must not simply be... *I don't want you be sexually active*. It must be more like... *Because this is who we are and what we believe, your daddy wants you to know that you do not have to have sex to be loved accepted or valued*. We must be consistent and actively involved in the coming and going of her life. We must know the who's who in her life... the Jimmy's, the Joey's, and now even the Cloe's! We must protect her innocence and defend her honor as our daughter. The world is not for her - or for your

dreams of Daddy's little girl. We cannot protect or defend something we do not have or something we have given away. What our daughters need passed on to them are character qualities that are both taught and caught. Those qualities are what we hold on to.

- **Can we write down four qualities that you want your daughter to have when she's twenty-one?**
- **How can we protect and defend those qualities in her life?**

### **Six - Be Her Logic and Determination**

We are the voice of logic and reason in our daughter's life. We establish and put into place the standard for decision making and values for our family. Dad's, we must lead our daughter's in logical problem-solving, practical wisdom, creative ingenuity, and mental toughness and determination. There is indeed a biblical and spiritual path for this kind of process. Our daughter's need us to help make her savvy and tough - not just against evil but evil people and evil possibilities. The bible calls for us to be "wise as serpents and as gentle as doves." This brings us to the point



of leading her forward in establishing a strong moral and ethical code.

**What is the code that you want for your daughter?**

**Can we write down what we believe is right behavior and wrong behavior?**

**Can we teach biblical principles as the foundation to those codes and behaviors?**

#### **4.3.16 – 4.17.16**

#### **Part – Mothers and Sons**

#### **Catch and Release**

God chose you as the mother of your son. Before the very foundation of this world, the Creator knew your name and He knew your son's name as well. God wrote the number of your days and those of your son's in His book of remembrance. And He ordained the generation in which you and your son would live.

Psalm 139:13-16

**You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret...Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.**

**Mothers with sons...** We need to first begin by stepping back and looking at a bigger and much more important design and plan than often is imagined by parents of children. Here it is:

**God has a plan and a path for your son. God has called you to join Him in the work He plans to do in your son's life in order to get him on the path He has chosen for his life.**

**Mothers** - you must become the instrument God will use to help train him to shine the much needed light on the unique biblical ministry of mothers and their sons! The Bible instructs all of God's servants to

Colossians 4:17

**take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.**

If we take this instruction literally (and there is no reason why we shouldn't) there is no pass here, and there is no get-out-of-jail-free card.

**There is only the opportunity to BE WHO GOD WANTS, and the decision to DO WHAT GOD ASKS.**

I realize that is not real warm and fuzzy - but it is really true, and completely honest. Here is some more...

**Mothers** - your ministry comes to you in the form of your son. The question you must begin (if you have not already) to ask yourself is, "How will you prepare yourself for that ministry?" First, know that God never intended for mothers to go it alone. Through His Word, He wants to equip you to train your son's to love and trust Him. As you follow God in molding the character of your son, you will undoubtedly face situations circumstances that are out of your control - but that does not mean that God is not in control. I'm quite sure that it comes as no surprise that life is unpredictable. The Bible warns us all,

1 Peter 3:12

**“Do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.”**

When you face struggles, yielding your emotions to the roller coaster of circumstances will only add to the stress and result in chaos. Remember, just because what you are feeling is real - does not mean that what you are feeling is reality!

**Mothers** - As you parent and nurture your son, if your focus is on every turn of events and every scratch and bruise, you will certainly be overwhelmed and afraid. Fear and confusion will rob you of courage needed to minister to your son. By contrast, focusing on God and resting in His character will bring peace and clarity. Rather than subjecting your family to the ups and downs of your emotional reactions, you can develop the habit of responding with an unwavering confidence in who God is, and that He has a plan and a path for your son. Knowing God intimately is critically important to your being a godly mother. So how does one develop that kind of confidence in God? Let's not kid ourselves - it's not easy! But, it is worth it, and this will help you to stay focused on the plan and the path that God has for your son!

## **A Biblical Template**

So what does this resolve look like—this hungering and thirsting after God? In the Psalms I read a passage that spoke what my heart was hoping and wanting to express to mothers:

Psalm 57:7

**My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast!**

When I read that, I felt it was the key to my being able to communicate effectively what I believe mothers need most to understand in their answering God's call to raise their son's. Those words were written by David in the middle of one of the greatest trials of his life. This small passage gives us insight to who he was becoming as a man. It of course does say so much about David, but it is also speaking about his mother and father who raised him to have that kind of strength and faith. What kind of woman had raised a son like this? Any mother who loves God and her children would want to live how he lived, and even more, want to raise her son to be like him.

David, while not without his faults, was devoted to seeking God.

In Psalm 89:20, God proclaimed,

**I have found My servant David...**

Note that God said He found David. In Scripture we also read, the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. (2 Chronicles 16:9). Take a minute to get an image or a clear thought of that. The eyes of God moving all across the earth in search of individuals whose hearts are loyal to Him. Why? So that He can show Himself mighty on their behalf. That is the plan and that is the path God has for your son - though not in full, but certainly the beginning! You don't have to do this mother thing alone. God stands ready to offer you His strength and direction. He is more concerned about the man your son becomes than even you are!

Learning to love God will make your heart loyal to Him. When I say this, I'm not talking about being a religious spiritual fanatic—that is, someone who merely goes through the dogmatic and emotional motions of religious duties and rituals in the hopes that you can somehow earn God's favor. No, I'm talking about genuine change that starts in the heart and draws upon God's power and wisdom. I'm talking about a true inner love and passion for God and not mere external behavior that might look good to others but amounts to nothing more than hollow or shallow actions. The loyalty God seeks comes from the heart.

The Holy Spirit can use your loyal heart to draw your son to know and obey God. If your faith isn't authentic, your son will know it and that will likely turn him away from the things of God. It is only as you truly love God and surrender to His perfect will that you are enabled to live as an example to your son and make God attractive and relatable to him.

David was willing to do anything God asked of him. God said,



Acts 13:22

**I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**

As David was growing up, he expressed his love for God in his psalms of worship. Out of that love grew trust. When David was just a young shepherd boy God allowed him to experience circumstances that would help to build that trust and to give him courage for the trials that he would face in the future. In the course of guarding the family sheep, David had to do battle against a lion a bear, and even a giant! That kind of activity and responsibility probably would not fly today. When David faced those dangerous encounters, he had choices to make—the same choices we have when we face a trial:

- **Run Away in Fear**
- **Question God's Goodness, and Become Bitter or Angry**
- **Rely on the Power of God to Persevere and Trust God for the Outcome (Believing it Will be Greater than the Beginning)**

**Mothers Don't Forget: God's plans and path for your son are greater than your plans and path for him.**

Relying on God's strength, David chose to stay and fight. His conquest over the lion and the bear prepared him to later fight a God-blaspheming giant who had taunted the Israelite army (1 Samuel 17:36-37).

In our world, David's kind of surrender to God with his life scares most people - especially mothers. It is important for mothers to be honest with God about those fears.

Remember, He already knows your thoughts and your fears.

***Trust God - trust that His plan and path for your son is greater than your own.***

Here are some choices that I believe **Nitzevet** (David's mother) made as she raised her son who would eventually become a great king and man after God's own heart.

These decisions made by David's mother are still completely relevant today, and much needed in the lives of millions of

young men struggling to become not only men of God, but leaders of their own families as well.

### **Choices Made - Men Made - Lives Changed**

**One** - She allowed her boy to become a man while he was still living at home.

**Two** - She had the courage to leave his circumstances and safety in the hands of God.

**Three** - She respected her husband's decisions and wisdom.

**Four** – She waited patiently on the Lord.

**4.24.16 – 5.8.16**

**Mothers and Daughters**

**Moms, Princesses, Queen Bees, BFFs, and the Kardashians**

Genesis 3:1-13

**Now the serpent was craftier than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.**

**He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes**

of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ESV

1 Corinthians 3:16-20

**Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.**

**Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." ESV**

Here is some research that can help provide a little insight and perspective to where and what we are thinking regarding a biblical model for motherhood and their daughters.

The National Institute on Media and Family published an article called, “Issues Directly Facing Our Daughters.” In the article they shared this interesting information.

- **The number one wish for girls ages eleven to seventeen is to be thinner.**
- **One study of toy commercials found that 50 percent of commercials aimed at girls spoke about physical attractiveness, while none of the commercials aimed at boys referred to appearance.**
- **Nationwide, 46 percent of female students in grades nine through twelve have had sex.**
- **Fourteen percent of all thirteen-year-old females have had sex.**
- **Nearly 35 percent of all young women in the U.S. become pregnant at least once before reaching the age of twenty—almost 850,000 each year.**
- **Eighty-three percent of female teens say that moral truth depends on the situation.**
- **Dating on college campuses has long been replaced by a “hookup” culture, where a guy and a girl get**

**together for some form of sexual encounter with no expectation of anything other than the sex.**

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**  
**ESV**

### ***Cornerstones Not Capstones***

The passage from Deuteronomy is a powerful picture of persistence and repetition used in words and lifestyle to pass on truths, traditions, and a valued way of life. Please take note: This is not just ancient history, this is relevant truth



in principle and in practice. This is what God expects of not only mothers, but of all parents today. **Honestly... this is a clear reminder that God is much more concerned that our children receive teaching and training in His truths, values, and principles than most of the secular training, social activities, and valueless commitments we have exhausted our time – talent – and treasure on.** While these things are worthwhile and often helpful to the development and the enrichment of our children, they should not be the primary focus and priority. They should not be the cornerstone, but rather the capstone. Scripture continually teaches and reminds us what God expects from mothers and fathers. Again, biblical truth should be the cornerstone of parenting and not the capstone. Without the cornerstone there is no need of a capstone.

In this world, it is more important than ever that moms are purposeful about the spiritual and virtuous training of their daughters. It is not enough to take them to church, to put them in Christian schools, and say bedtime prayers. As mothers appointed and empowered by God to raise your

daughter in today's world, you must move forward with purpose and determination – you cannot be passive or you will lose your daughters. You must have a clear understanding of God's truths in order to imprint (tattoo) them on her heart. Impressing God's truths on your daughter means teaching not only with passionate words, but showing her with passionate and intentional actions. *This is how I live and this is how you should live.* In other words, you need to practice what you preach, and preach what you practice.

### ***Eliminating Procrastinating***

If we are to counteract the negative influences of the culture, we must be armed with God's truths and teach them to our children. We must talk about God's truths when we sit at home and when we walk along the road, when we lie down and when we get up. And we must do so in the hearing of our children. A mother's commitment to pass down God's truths to her children can literally impact the souls of future grandchildren and great-grandchildren for generations to come. As mothers of

daughters who are exposed to the negative influences of revised feminist ideology and secular humanism on steroids, we face a challenge that, at times, seems insurmountable. Yet mothers of daughters should be reminded, you are not alone. God has equipped you with everything you need to accomplish His purposes and plans for your daughter's life. In the second part of this teaching, we will give in more detail the practical and daily things mothers can do to counteract the negative and powerful influences of the culture and to help you raise your daughters to be godly women.

Mothers please receive this positive reminder with love today... now is not the time to procrastinate or to look for any excuse as to why you cannot or do not proactively lead, mentor, and nurture your daughters in a biblical tradition. Mothers, because you love the way you love, and because of the graces given you by God to lead, mentor, and nurture your daughters are so dynamic and life changing it is essential that you engage in the process and not let up. I did a little research from a mother's

perspective as to why this kind of leadership, mentoring, and nurturing does not always take place.

**ONE – TOO BUSY:** Busyness is a way of life, but the truth is, we make time for the things we want to be important. I cannot imagine anything more important to you than the spiritual training of your daughters. No doubt, the fruits of team sports, dance lessons, and a good education will benefit your daughter for years to come. However, training her to walk in God's ways will impact her for eternity.

**TWO – I WANT TO BE HER FRIEND:** Deep down inside every mother wants her daughter to like her. This natural inclination gets out of balance, however, if as her mother you care more about being her cool friend than you do about the honor of being her mother. Being a mother to your daughter is always about meeting her needs and not your own.

Matthew 10:37

**Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.**

**THREE - I AM NOT THAT KNOWLEDGEABLE WHEN IT COMES TO THE BIBLE AND TEACHING GOD'S TRUTHS:** Time to hit "The Book" and not just the books. Be driven by the realization that your ability to verbalize effectively what you believe and why I believe it will impact generations to come in your family tree through the life of your daughter.

**FOUR – THE WORLD IS JUST NOT THAT BAD:** This is classic denial or maybe just plain apathy either way it is not good. As a mother who follows Christ, you know better than that, and you can do better that! The eternal souls of your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren are at risk. The times we live in are dangerously serious, and its time to respond seriously and dangerously. As mothers of daughters you must unite, take up your weapons, and stand for Truth. You stand in the gap, you are the

difference make in your daughter's life!

### ***In the Eyes of the Lord***

In 2 Kings, when the reign of a new king was introduced, the name of his mother was often included. With each king we are told that he either “did what was good in the eyes of the LORD” or “did what was evil in the eyes of the LORD.” What if we were to look over our respective family trees and find listed beside the name of each deceased relative one of those two phrases; “did what was good in the eyes of the LORD” or “did what was evil in the eyes of the LORD?” Or how about a more frightening thought... what if we were to find the name of each relative's mother listed directly beside the phrase? We all know that a mother or a father are certainly not to blame if their grown children choose not to walk in the ways of the Lord. I have known, and know, many of godly mothers who were devoted to the spiritual training of their children only to experience the heartbreak of one or more of the children becoming rebellious prodigals. Our children will ultimately make their own decisions regarding matters of faith. Still, it is

true however that regardless of what they choose (good or evil), a mother will forever be linked to her child.

The challenge we face regarding the spirit of our age is no different from Old Testament times when the Israelite people would *give-in* to the negative influences of the times and find themselves empty, lost and hopeless.

Malachi 3:7,

**God said, “Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty.**

This is 2016... where are we supposed to return to? Well, the idea was to return to God! There is no physical time travel but there is a way to return to God, to His truth, and to the biblical values and teachings of Jesus. That is a real place. It is a place in Him where God wants us to return in times of trouble and evil in which are living.

Going back quickly to the succession of kings that ruled over the Israelites, biblical history reveals that the majority of Kings left a legacy of doing “what was evil in the eyes of the LORD.” Occasionally, a good king would come along and do “what was right in the eyes of the LORD” but that was the exception and not the rule. King Josiah was one of those good kings. Amazingly Josiah became king at the age of eight years old – crazy but true. Second Kings 22:2 notes that in spite of his young age *“he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD . . . not turning aside to the right or the left.”* I don’t know how many eight year olds you know but... the only way for that to have happened was for a godly mother to be involved or you can just forget about it.

The truth is this... Josiah did not do “what was right in the eyes of the LORD,” because he was the product of a long line of ancestors steeped in godly heritage. That was not the case. His father and grandfather had enough dysfunction to make the U.S. Congress look normal. His father, King Amon, did what was “evil in the eyes of the LORD” (2 Kings 21:20), reigned only two years, and was conspired against by his own officials and assassinated in the palace. His grandfather, King Manasseh, did what was



“evil in the sight of the LORD” (2 Kings 21:2), reigned fifty-five years, and “shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end.” (2 “Kings 21:16). He erected altars to Baal, bowed down and worshipped the starry hosts, sacrificed his son in the fire, practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. This was not a godly role model for his grandson, Josiah – more like *grandpa’s gone wild*.

I believe Josiah did what was “right in the eyes of the LORD,” because he had a mother who was committed to raising her children to do what was “right in the eyes of the LORD.” Josiah’s mother was **Jedidah**, a direct descendent of Caleb (the good spy). The biblical lineage of Caleb shows a generational pattern of godly men and women who followed the law and lived honorably before God. In the eighth year of Josiah’s reign, when he was approximately sixteen years old, Scripture tells that Josiah began to “seek the God of his ancestor David.” This he would have found out from Jedidah his mother. In the twelfth year of his reign, at approximately twenty years old,

he began to “purify Judah and Jerusalem, destroying all the pagan shrines, the Asherah poles, and the carved idols and cast images” (2 Chronicles. 34:3 NLT).

Perhaps the most defining moment for Josiah came six years later, in the eighteenth year of his reign. After purifying the land and the temple, Josiah ordered that repairs begin on the “temple of the LORD his God” (2 Chronicles 34:8). One day he sent his secretary, Shaphan, to the temple to inform Hilkiah, the high priest, to pay out the workers who were repairing the temple. While performing this task, Hilkiah informed Shaphan that he had found the “Book of the Law” in the temple of the Lord. Shaphan returned with the book and read from it in the presence of the king. Keep in mind that up until this point, Josiah had no knowledge of the book; he is hearing its contents for the first time. When the book was read, Josiah was faced with the sudden realization that God had previously established a covenant with the Israelite people and had set forth a code of conduct for the people to follow. Upon hearing the contents of the book and coming

to terms with the shortfall of the Israelite people in meeting God's terms, Josiah humbled himself, tore his robes, and wept in the presence of the Lord (see 2 Kings 22:19).

Josiah's response to the reading of the Book of the Law and his subsequent decision to return to the teachings of the Lord can serve as a model to Christian mothers today who are faced with raising their daughters in an ungodly world. The directive is this...

### ***Teach Your Daughter to Turn to God in an Ungodly World***

- PRAY FOR AND WITH YOUR DAUGHTER – CALL OUT TO GOD

Psalm 22:4-5

**“Our ancestors trusted in you, and you rescued them.**

**They cried out to you and were saved. They trusted in you and were never disgraced.”**

- MAKE A COVENANT WITH GOD FOR YOUR DAUGHTER – DON'T TAKE HER TO GOD, GIVE HER TO GOD:

Isaiah 59:21

**"And this is my covenant with them," says the Lord. "My Spirit will not leave them, and neither will these words I have given you. They will be on your lips and on the lips of your children and your children's children forever. I, the Lord, have spoken!"**

- TEACH GODLY CHOICES TO YOUR DAUGHTER – MAKE GODLY CHOICES:

Joshua 24:15

**"But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD."**

- HAVE A PLAN OF ACTION FOR YOUR DAUGHTER – NO MATTER WHAT, USE IT:

Daniel 3:17-18

**“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. 18 But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”**

- TEACH YOUR DAUGHTER WHAT SHE IS WORTH – NOTHING ABOUT HER IS CHEAP:

John 13:34-35

**“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”**

- BUILD A MOTHER/DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR DAUGHTER – START EARLY AND STAY LATE

**5.15.16 – 5.29.16**

**Family – God's Fortress for Spiritual Truth**

**Part V – Families - Worship - Commitment - Community**

Psalm 23

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

**He makes me lie down in green pastures.**

**He leads me beside still waters. He restores my**

**soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness**

**for his name's sake. Even though I walk through**

**the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no**

**evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff,**

**they comfort me. You prepare a table before me**

**in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my**

**head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness**

**and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,**

**and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

**ESV**

Hebrews 10:24-25

**And let us consider how to stir up one another to**

**love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. ESV**

Colossians 3:1-2

**If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ, is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**

Proverbs 4:25

**Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.**



## ***Introduction***

As the Church of Jesus, our priority as a gathering Christian community is to love, encourage, teach, pray, share, unite, worship, and finally, help one another into healthy spiritual progression and procession. In this process and focus we navigate the obvious and not so obvious obstacles and the passive and aggressive attacks of a dominant secular and antichrist culture.

This might sound a little negative and whinny... but friends make no mistake - it is truth! The overwhelming consumerist and entitlement mentality in our nation has crossed over the Jordan River and now flows freely through the thinking of most Christians throughout the American Church. More believers in America approach the concept of finding and remaining in a church the same way they would go about buying a car, shopping online for the latest technological gadget, or choosing a *NetFlix* movie to watch on a Friday night. That seems to be a long way from the church that Jesus came to establish. The Church He came to serve rather than to be served by. The same

Church that He told to deny itself take up its cross and follow Him. Now we appear to be more about branding, image messaging, amenities and convenience, and hip-sexy-cool. Serving and loving communities of genuine faith in God and commitment to biblical truth and integrity, have been replaced by the echoed theme of our self-centric culture... “what can you do for me?” This will sound harsh but because we ought to hear it I’ll say it any way just - I’ll just say it in a non-harsh way.

The hurried worship environment, ministry separated families, talk show approach, bible-optional pop-cultural teaching, and the overall shift of focus leave little to no room for the presence and move of the Holy Spirit, or the hunger to worship God, confess one’s faith, teach our children, or to build desperately needed community. We are far too often have become about growth indexes and the personal preferences of individual church hoppers and shoppers. I’m going to share this in a loving way, with a loving heart, but my sense is that like the ancient prophets to the people of

God, this message will not be received well. The family has lost its love for the church, and the church has lost its love for God. Reunion must not become part of that loss. We must reclaim loving God, teaching His truth, and caring for one another in fellowship and prayer. We must do this so that our families and friends can be the church that Christ gave His love and life for.

The trends and concerns I speak of today are real. The American Church is reflected in the 2015 Pew Research Study that showed an alarming 10-year decline in Americans self-identifying as Christians. The problem is demonstrated any given month as families who used to attend church weekly and even several times a week now attend services one to two times a month (and I'm not referring to the shut-in, the sick, or those who must work). It is impossible to build anything of consequence in any organization or endeavor with that kind of inconsistency and commitment. Imagine if a construction crew showed up to a building site only once or twice a month. What would happen if physicians and nurses manned the hospitals and ERs

only a couple of times a month. Consider the problems in education if our teachers worked only two days a month, or the students only attended class once or twice a week. And yet, the well-being and future of our great nation hangs in the balance as political hedonists, Christia-phobes, and unlearned socialists and hostile progressives push forward over our lives and our faith fully committed to their causes. We cannot build godly and committed relationships, nor cultural-influence with future generations with an apathetic, dispassionate, and lukewarm commitment to the church of Jesus.

**So, what's the point here?** The point has become that we have a fundamental misunderstanding of why we gather as Christians and why it is important to us, to our families, and to God. True, we gather to worship God, learn the biblical principles of His Word, and to fellowship with one another. But if you read the words of the writer of Hebrews, our priority is gathering so that we can encourage and help one another to progress spiritually in an increasingly secular, pessimistic, and

antagonistic culture: *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching”* (Hebrews 10:24-25). Luke tells us that Jesus left an example of faithful attendance explaining, *“...on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom”* (Luke 4:16). Think about that for a moment. Jesus, God the Son, had a regular habit of going to church for worship. How much more do we (His followers) need to develop that same faithfulness and discipline?

The origin of this spiritual chaos and indifference in our country sadly are Christians who fail to consider how they can help, minister, and encourage someone else by faithfully being present and active to serve the church and community rather than on serving their own wants, preferences, convenience, and schedules. The understanding of coming to church for what you can give and not for what you can get is the key to

hope and a true spiritual renewal in our country. When you are not in church the unique gifts and abilities that God has placed in you are absent, and not available to others who desperately need them. That's why inconsistent church attendance and involvement is not what God had in mind for His people, and again is a long way from the heart, mission, and commands of Jesus.

If you are a consistent, active, and faithful part of the church community, then don't let anything stop you from continuing on, and then leading your family in the same way with your dedication. If you have become distant, apathetic, indifferent, lukewarm and selfish in your attitude and faithful attendance and participation in the Church community then it is probably time to repent to God and return to a faithful lifestyle and relationship with your local church community.

**“Don't just be consistent, active and faithful enough to your church community to make yourself feel good – be consistent, active and**

**faithful enough to make others feel good as well.”**

This kind of commitment is what God wants, and certainly what God has planned for you and your family's best interests and spiritual growth. As the writer of Hebrews challenged us, we should become more diligent and dedicated to one another as we see the end coming, not more distant and removed.

## **5.29.16**

### ***Starting Place***

The trends of apathy and lack of commitment in church-world are the result of the apathy and commitment to relationship with God. This demands not only humble repentance, but intentional reform. There must be a starting place for that to happen. That starting place is found in the principles of strong biblical leadership. Principles that do not waver when tested by cultural trends and spiritual sloth. Biblical leadership is different from cultural or trending leadership. Jesus said...

John 6:38

**“I have come down not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.”**

Real principle-driven family leaders have become rare. Jesus-style leaders are even rarer. There's a reason for this. If you research “leader” in the Scripture you will find the word is directly alluded to 78 times. And every reference is in the Old Testament. Jesus didn't subscribe to the typical cultural or religious notion of leadership. Jesus model of leadership was and is based on the following principles:

- **Servanthood** - Matthew 20:28

**The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.**

**Modeling** - Matthew 11:29

- **Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.** (Do as I do, not just as I say)
- **Sacrifice** - John 10:15  
**I lay down my life for the sheep.**



These are principles that must govern and navigate our lives and families if we are going to be people on God's mission preaching God's message. As we take a serious look at leading our families, it is not just a look for the stereotypical family. So, if you're single, or single-parenting, or don't have kids at all, don't mentally or spiritually check out on Scripture. These biblical principles apply to each of us because somehow, we belong to a family and God wants us to accept our mission to lead our family like Jesus would. One of the greatest studies on spiritual and family leadership is on the life of Joseph in the book of Genesis. I want to start today on two of these principles from the life of Joseph that demonstrate to us Godly leadership for our families, and how we can lead them back to God and to His Church.

**ONE - NEVER PASS ON THE CHANCE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT**

Genesis 39:9,

**No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?**

In leading our families we must return ourselves to doing what is right - not simply knowing what is right. Joseph did what was right by modeling spiritual leadership and commitment to excellence in five areas of his life:

*Perseverance - Purity - Prayer - Worship - Witness*

## **TWO - NEVER PASS ON THE CHANCE TO PLAN AHEAD**

We talk about planning ahead but most often it's just talk. To lead our families back to God and to His church and community we have to be people of foresight and action. Joseph demonstrated both of these qualities.

Genesis 41:33,

**And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt.**

In leading our families we must absolutely trust God, but also remember that God calls us as spiritual leaders to be wise and to be watching. The most crucial areas to plan ahead in during these uncertain days: *Priorities - Pocketbook - Protecting*

### **THREE - NEVER PASS ON A CHANCE TO FORGIVE**

Genesis 45:14-15,

**Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them.**

In leading our families we must let go of the past, the “right” to get even, the root of bitterness, the recall and replay, and then as leaders of our families we move

forward to embrace the future and God's plans for our lives. It is important to recognize God's habit of bringing good out of the bad.

Genesis 50:20

**“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good”**

Romans 8:28

**And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**

**Finally, it will be very important** to sow positive seeds into our relationships. Well known leadership author John Maxwell in his book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, said... “Leadership develops daily, not just in a day.” So to put that into practical expression we must seek God's face daily if we are to effectively lead our families to Him and into the community of faith - the Church. Plainly put, there just aren't any shortcuts, and there are no days off. We can't make up what we miss

- it's gone and we will never get it back again. Don't give up right here... because this is tough and uncomfortable, or even what seems to be over the top impossible. This does not mean all is lost and hopeless, or that the church is asking too much of you.

Philippians 4:13,

**I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**

The author of this passage was the apostle Paul. In this letter to the Philippian Church he describes how he has learned to respond in the right way in situations both favorable and unfavorable because he knows what is right. So he says *I can do everything in Christ who gives me strength*. For those who are struggling to faithfully lead your family this can be said even clearer you...

**“Christ will give you strength to do what is right, when you know that it is right.”**

Start by reclaiming the truth for your life and what it means to lead your family into a relationship with Christ and His Church. Then commit to the daily process of personal relationship with God – getting it right, because you know it's right. At that point you will already have begun to think differently about the Church, and you begin to diligently lead your family into faith and into community with Christ and His Church.

This is God's plan for the family – a fortress for spiritual truth. May He have mercy on us all as we lead and love!