
THE FAMILY



As God Would Have It

Gene Taylor

This book is dedicated to my family for the understanding and support they have given me over the years. Without their love and the sacrifices they have made, I would never have been able to give myself so fully to the work of the Lord. I pray God will bless them eternally.

Gene Taylor
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Introduction

The family was designed and instituted by God for the benefit of mankind. At the time of creation God saw that it was not good for man to be alone so He created woman and provided the marriage relationship—the beginning of a home in which children would be born and raised (Genesis 2:18-24)

Just as He has given guidelines to govern conduct in His spiritual family, the church, God has also given guidelines to govern conduct in the physical family. As Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23), He is to be “head” of each physical family as well. His will should guide them in all things.

This study has been prepared to help people know, understand and apply the will of God given through Jesus Christ that pertains to the family and each relationship in it.

The Responsibilities of Husbands

A Man Who Is to Take a Wife Must Leave Father and Mother (Matthew 19:5)

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

The man leaves the “headship” of his parents to become the head of his own family. He leaves the financial support of his parents to provide for himself and his own household.

His wife becomes his first earthly loyalty and he is to live for her. He is to think of her and please her before he thinks of and seeks to please his parents.

A Man Who Marries Must Cleave to His Wife (Matthew 19:5)

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.” (NASV)

“Cleave” literally meant cemented, glued or adhered to. This word was used in the original Greek manuscript in Acts 11:23 where Barnabas, sent by the church in Jerusalem to encourage the Christians in Antioch, “Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would *cleave* unto the Lord” (KJV). His purpose was to urge those Christians to hold fast to the Lord.

In marriage, God joins the man and woman together as husband and wife. They are to become “one flesh.” The godly husband sticks with his wife in and through all things—“for better or for worse.”

A Husband Must Be the Head of His Wife (Ephesians 5:23)

“For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”

Proper leadership is needed in every family. The husband, therefore, must live up to his God-given responsibility.

The husband is to be the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. That means that his headship must be exercised in love and humility. It means he is to give consideration to his wife and her needs and desires before himself and his needs.

He is to be neither a tyrant nor dictator. His wife is not to be his slave and “bow and scrape” before him.

A Husband Is to Honor His Wife (1 Peter 3:7)

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

The idea of honoring his wife suggests that the husband is to esteem and respect his wife. He is to treat her in a manner which expresses proper honor in both word and deed.

The wife is to be honored as “the weaker vessel.” Though some believe this has reference to the physical weakness of the woman in comparison to the man, a better explanation is that she is to be honored as a piece of “fine china” rather than as a piece of “everyday stoneware.”

She is to be honored because she is a fellow heir “of the grace of life.” She is highly regarded by God and, therefore, must be highly regarded by her husband.

The wife must be honored by her husband for if he fails to honor her his prayers will be hindered. One's relationship with God cannot be what it ought to be if he does not have the proper attitude toward his fellow man. God will never hear the prayers of a husband who neglects, mistreats or abuses his wife.

A wife should also be honored because she has honored her husband. Of all the men she could have chosen to give herself and her life, she chose her husband. She has honored him with the greatest gift she could give another person—herself.

A Husband Must Dwell with His Wife with Understanding (1 Peter 3:7)

“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

The understanding that the husband must have is that of the marriage relationship and his God-given responsibilities toward his wife in that relationship. *Ginosko*, the Greek word in the original manuscript translated “understanding,” “signifies to be taking in knowledge, to come to know, recognize, understand, or to understand completely” (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 637). Marvin Vincent said the word means, “With an intelligent recognition of the nature of the marriage relation” (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. I, 651).

One may never be able to fully understand his wife but he can completely understand the teachings of Scripture on the marriage relationship.

A Husband Is to Provide for the Needs of His Wife

He is to provide for her physical needs (1 Timothy 5:8); sexual needs (1 Corinthians 7:1-4); emotional needs and spiritual needs (1 Peter 3:7).

In providing for his wife's emotional needs, the godly husband understands the link between the emotional and sexual and will see that the emotional needs of his wife are satisfied. He will see to her spiritual needs as a joint heir of the grace of life.

A Husband Is to Love His Wife (Ephesians 5:25-33)

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Love is the summation of all the husband should be and do. His love for his wife, when compared to the love of Jesus Christ for the church, as seen in the above text, shows it should be sacrificial (25); preeminent (28); and truly caring (33).

The Responsibilities of Wives

The Primary Earthly Responsibility of a Woman Who Chooses to Marry Is Her Family (Titus 2:3-5)

“...the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

Having made the choice to be a wife and mother, a woman must give herself gladly to the work of the home so that she will not give the enemies of the cause of Christ an excuse for reproaching her life. That does not mean that she is to be chained at home. The “worthy woman” of Proverbs 31 actively engaged in endeavors outside of the home but her focus was always on her family.

Glory, fame and great blessing are to be found in her role as a devoted wife and mother. Of the “worthy woman” it is said, “Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ‘Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.’ Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised” (Proverbs 31:28-30).

A Wife Is to Love Her Husband (Titus 2:3-4)

“...the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children...”

As with the husband, love is the summation of all the wife should be and do. After her relationship to Christ, her consideration for her husband and her relationship to him will be her first thoughts.

A Wife Is to Be a Good Companion to Her Husband (Genesis 2:18)

“And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’”

The woman was created to meet this specific need. Someone has said, “If the wife is designed as a companion, she is man’s equal as a human being. Authority is another matter.”

A Wife Is to Be in Subjection to Her Husband (Colossians 3:18)

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

God placed the man in the leadership role in the family (1 Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 3:18; Ephesians 5:23-25). The godly wife reverences her husband (Ephesians 5:33) and lovingly submits to him in everything that is right. She is not to be as Sarah who went along with the lie Abraham told Abimelech (Genesis 20:12). She is to submit “in the Lord,” that is, in those things which are in accordance with the word of God.

Being in submission does not mean that she is reduced to slave status or viewed as a piece of property. Such is not the Biblical view. The Bible never teaches a woman’s inferiority to man. She is no more dishonored by being in subjection to her husband than the church is by being in subjection to Christ.

The Responsibilities of Parents

Parents Are to Provide the Material Needs of Children (1 Timothy 5:8)

“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

The responsibility to provide for children includes such things as food, clothing, shelter, etc. Caution, though, must be exercised when meeting this responsibility for children can be given too much. Also, parents must understand that providing material things for children is no substitute for other responsibilities.

Parents Are to Bring Up Children in the Training and Admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4)

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

The word translated “training” or “nurture” in some older translations, means, “The whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment)” (J.H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of New Testament Words*, 473).

The physical, mental, social and spiritual training of a child must be in accordance with the word of God. When a child, Jesus developed in all of these areas. Luke 2:52 says that he grew in wisdom, stature, favor with men and favor with God. Wisdom is mental or intellectual development. Stature is physical development. Favor with men is social development. Favor with God is spiritual development.

Children are to be taught the way of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6). This principle was given great emphasis in the Old Law (Deuteronomy 6:7-8; 31:9-13). We must also emphasize it today for God has given the primary responsibility of raising and educating children to the home, not the church.

Children need to be taught:

- Respect for parents (Romans 1:30; Ephesians 6:1-2; Genesis 18:19; 1 Samuel 3:13; Proverbs 13:24; 22:15).
- Respect for older people (1 Timothy 5:1).
- Respect for law officials (1 Timothy 2:1, 4; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:17).
- To work (2 Thessalonians 3:10).
- Proper use of money (Luke 16:11).
- The permanency and sanctity of marriage (Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:9).
- The need of faithfully serving the Lord by obeying His gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9) and by living godly, faithful lives (Revelation 2:19; Hebrews 2:14).

Parents Must Keep from Provoking Their Children to Wrath (Ephesians 6:4)

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

A parallel text in Colossians 3:21 says children should not be provoked, “lest they be discouraged.” How can parents produce wrath and discouragement in their children?

Parents can produce wrath and discouragement in children by:

- Making unreasonable demands of them. God requires all, including parents, to “do justly” (Micah 6:8).
- Correcting them with obvious and fierce anger. Proverbs 15:1 says that, “Grievous words stir up anger.”
- Punishing them excessively with a penalty unfit for the wrong. “He who handles a matter wisely shall find good” (Proverbs 16:20).
- Belittling them or constantly being negative. This includes such things as telling them they are “worthless,” “no good,” or they “will never amount to anything.”

Parents Are to Set the Right Example Before Their Children (2 Corinthians 3:2-3)

“You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.”

Parents, as well as all Christians, are living letters. They are “known and read of all men,” but especially by their children. There is not an adult who does not remember the example of his or her parents.

Examples teach values. Parents are a living demonstration of what they consider important. Children are powerfully impressed in:

- Seeing parents worship God, read the Bible and follow Christ daily.
- Hearing parents pray, sing praise, discuss Bible subjects, encourage others and teach faithfulness.

Examples in the home include love, respect and understanding (Ephesians 5:22-23; 4:32); Bible study and prayer (2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17); and a high standard of morality (Titus 2:11-12; 2:4-5).

Examples in the church include attendance to services (Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 6:33); respect for “leaders” (1 Timothy 5:17); reverence for worship (Exodus 3:5; Matthew 18:20); work for both old and young (Philippians 2:12); and giving of one’s means (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

Parents Are to Discipline Their Children (Proverbs 22:15)

“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.”

God demands that there be discipline in the home. Parents who withhold it, in reality, do not really love their children (Proverbs 13:24; Hebrews 12:6-7).

Discipline of children is two-fold—both instructive and corrective (in that order). It must be administered fairly and applied continually. “The punishment should fit the crime” is a good saying. Parents must also realize that “hit and miss” discipline never succeeds. Also, when more than one child is involved, there must be no partiality.

The errors, mistakes and sins of children cannot be overlooked or condoned for children must learn that “actions bring consequences” if they are going to live properly before God.

Eli, the Old Testament high priest, is an example of the consequences of a lack of discipline (1 Samuel 2:22-25; 3:13). He knew of his children’s sins and wickedness yet he did not take proper actions to correct them. As a result, they became a curse to him and all Israel. Parents who tolerate the sins of their children with the attitude “They’ll grow out of it,” should learn from Eli’s failure.

Discipline includes instilling within the child a respect for authority but you cannot teach a child to respect an authority that is not there. Therefore, parents must establish rules of conduct for their children, consistently apply them and punish the child when he/she violates them remembering at all times to be fair and flexible but firm.

The Responsibilities of Children

Children Are to Obey Their Parents (Ephesians 6:1-3)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: 3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

“In the Lord” means according to the will of God. One cannot set aside God’s will in favor of human will (Acts 5:29). It is good for children to learn to apply the will of God early in life.

“This is right” lets children know that being obedient to parents is a divine directive. It is that which God commands. Colossians 3:20 says, “This is well pleasing,” meaning that God is pleased when children obey parents. Since that is the case, He must be displeased when children are disobedient.

Colossians 3:20 also says that children should obey their parents in “all things.” Children are not to obey just when they want to, when they want something or when it suits them but at all times in all things.

God takes disobedience by children very seriously. In the first chapter of Romans, the apostle Paul named “disobedient to parents” in a long list of sins that included “sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder and hating God.

R.L. Whiteside, in his *Commentary on Romans*, said, “Not many things break down the morals of a country more quickly and cause more lawlessness than disrespect for parents. If children disrespect parental authority, they will disrespect all authority. If they have no regard for their parents, they are not likely to have regard for anything. But when such conditions prevail, parents are not blameless. Obedience and respect are matters that have to be learned. ‘Though he was a son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered.’ Parents that do not try to train their children in right principles and good habits care very little for them. But it is hard for you to train up your children as they should be trained when everybody else lets theirs run loose and do as they please. However nothing but a decay of morals can be expected where children are not taught obedience and respect to parents” (45).

Children Are to Honor Father and Mother (Ephesians 6:2)

“‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise...”

Honor is love plus respect, reverence and the corresponding obedience. Jesus applied this command (cf. Exodus 20:12) to the concept of providing for parents (Mark 7:9, 13; cf. 1 Timothy 5:4, 8, 16). The constant, tender care of children for those who brought them into the world is a beautiful thing (Proverbs 23:22).

Conclusion

May all of us seek to have godly families. May we look to the inspired Scriptures to guide us in our roles whether male or female, husband or wife, father and mother or children.

It is my prayer that the following might be true of your family.

Our Family

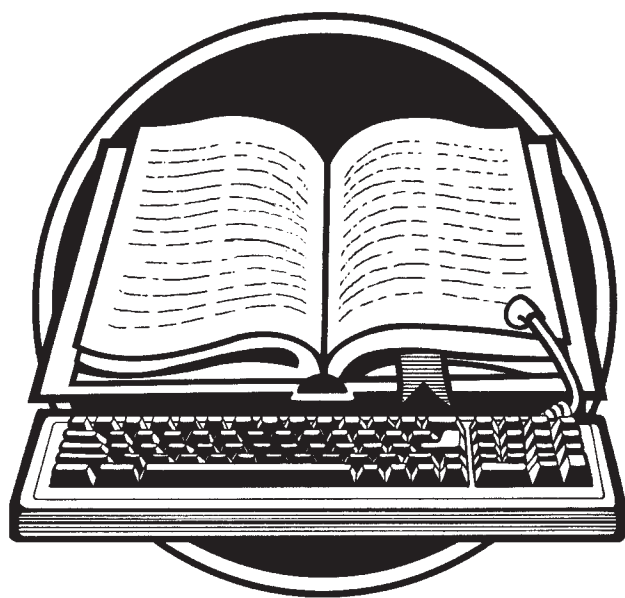
God made us a family,
We need one another, we love one another,
we forgive one another
We work together, we play together,
we worship together.

Together we use God's word, together we grow in Christ,
Together we love all men, together we serve our God
Together we hope for heaven.

These are our hopes and ideals
Help us attain them, O God,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(Selected)



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