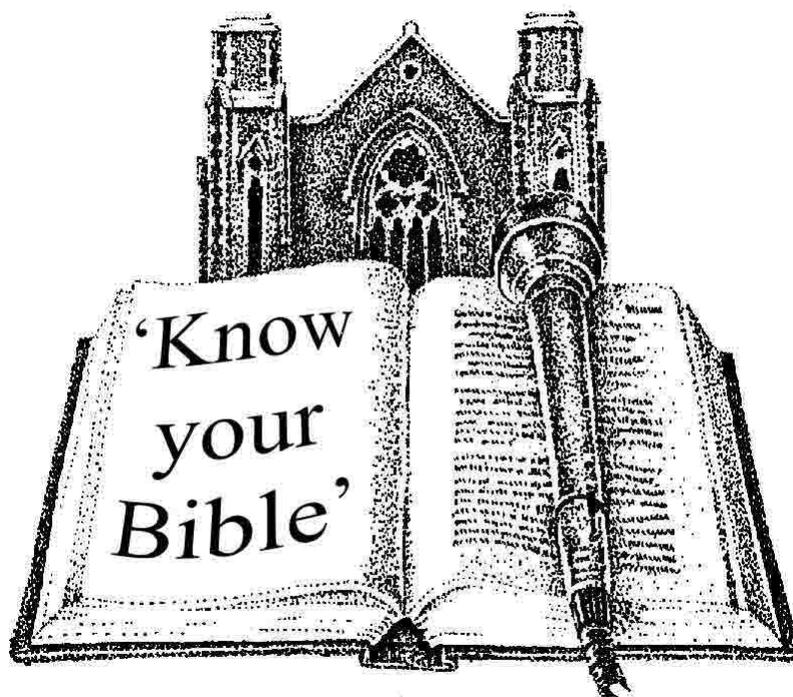


God's Will For the family!

Talks in answer to the question:-

**“What does the Bible teach
About family life?”**

Study Notes by Stuart Olyott



God's Will For the family!

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God's Will For the family

1. MARRIAGE - an outline of what the Bible teaches.

1. It is an ordinance of God.

- God created man male and female, and gave the gift of marriage even before the Fall. Genesis 1:27, 2:18-25.
- The Lord Jesus Christ declared that men and women united in marriage are united by GOD. Matthew 19:4-6.
- So:-
 - Marriage must not be looked upon as a useful custom, but as a divine institution. It is, not man's idea, but God's idea for men.
 - Men and women are God's creatures, and have no right to enter into any relationship with each other, except marriage, which God has ordained.
 - No State has a right to have a law of marriage which is different from that which is taught in God's Word.

2. It is to be a lifetime-union between one man and one woman.

- Its original institution makes this clear. Genesis 2:18-25.
- The words of the Lord Jesus Christ make this clear. Matthew 19:3-10.

The Bible permits divorce in certain cases, but only very, very reluctantly.

It never commands, encourages or approves of divorce.

In fact God hates divorce. Malachi 2:16.

Marriage is for life; all divorce and separation is contrary to God's order.

3. It is given for clear reasons.

- For satisfying companionship and mutual help. Genesis 2:18.
- For the increase of the human race. Genesis 1:28.
- For the prevention of uncleanness. 1 Corinthians 7:9.
- For the good of human society - the family is a tightly-knit social group, which is the basic unit of authority, love, care, and nurture. (Whole Bible: see 10 commandments).

4. It is a gift which has certain restrictions.

- It is honourable and lawful in all people. Hebrews 13:4.
The Bible does not teach that it is 'more holy to remain single.
- A Christian, however, may only marry a fellow-believer. 1 Corinthians 7:39.

- Nobody may marry a close relative - that is anybody closer than a cousin, even if that relative is only a relative of your deceased partner. (Leviticus 18:6-23, 20:10-21 still applies, because it refers to permanent relationships, not to the temporary ceremonies of the Jews).

It is a gift which has certain rules.

- **It requires a public wedding ceremony.**

It cannot be entered into just by private consent, but the man and wife should pledge their exclusive and lifelong union to each other in front of witnesses.

(This was the practice in the Bible; referred to many times.

Jesus approved of it - He attended a wedding. John 2:1-11,

- and often referred to them in His teaching.)

It is unthinkable that there should be physical union of husband and wife before a ceremony is performed. See Matthew 1:18.

- **It sets up a new relationship**

It means leaving one's parents, and joining to your partner. Genesis 2:24.

This new relationship has priority over all previous relationships

- **ONLY in marriage may physical union of man and woman take place**

- This is true, even if a couple must wait a long time before being married.

- See Jacob's example Genesis 29:15-30.

- The act of physical union makes two people into ONE. 1 Corinthians 6:15-20. We are only to be united as one person with a partner to whom we are totally and exclusively committed for life.

- Any departure from God's order is prohibited and condemned.

Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:20, Hebrews 13:4.

(See also 2 Peter 2:6, 1 Corinthians 6:18).

- ❖ So sacred and holy is the marriage relationship, that God uses it to picture Christ's relationship with His people. Ephesians 5:22-33.
- ❖ True happiness and blessedness lies in keeping God's Word. (Psalm 1). Those considering marriage do well to remember this, as do those already joined together by God.
- ❖ For those who have failed there is cleansing and forgiveness available in the Lord Jesus Christ.
1 John 1:9.

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2. Husband and wife together

A reminder:-

Our aim

- is not to see what different people have had to say about these subjects
- is not to see what people have done in the past, so that we can copy them.
- is not to see what is the most convenient way for family life to be run.
- is not to share and pool our experiences.

No!

We are coming to see WHAT GOD'S WORD TEACHES - its great principles.

We are coming to see how things ought to be.

Psalm 127:1!!

With the whole Biblical teaching on marriage in our minds, let us now look at some things that husband and wife should remember TOGETHER:-

1. Marriage is a 3-way relationship.

When God gave marriage to the human race, Adam and Eve were upright & holy. They were in a right relationship with GOD, as well as with each other!

This was how God intended marriage to be.

He never intended that men and women should enter into the marriage relationship - and not have HIM as the CENTRE!

Today men and women are, by nature, against God. (Romans 8.7)
In this condition they marry - and leave God out!

It is only by His common grace that such men and women ever enjoy any sort of harmony - for One Person in the marriage is MISSING!

Christians are reconciled to God, through Christ.

So ONLY Christians have the possibility of enjoying marriage as God originally intended it.

When their relationship with God is what it ought to be, (which means obeying His instructions for family-life), they are able to rise to the heights of marital and family happiness intended by God.

- the unconverted can never experience this.
- we call on them to repent and believe the Gospel.
- the rest of this series is about CHRISTIAN marriage and family-life.

2. Some privileges a Christian husband & wife share equally

- **They are equally the creatures of God.** Genesis 1:26-27.
 - they BOTH share this honour and dignity.
 - they BOTH are made in the image of God.
- **They are equally sinful, as fallen creatures.** Romans 3:10-19.
 - they BOTH share this humiliation and depravity.
 - they BOTH are alienated from God.
- **They are equally new creations in the Lord Jesus Christ.** Galatians 3:28.
 - they BOTH share this privilege and standing; 1 Peter 3:7.
 - they BOTH are reconciled to God.

3. Some responsibilities which a Christian husband & wife share equally.

- **They are to complement each other.** Genesis 2:18-25.
 - it is the man's glory that woman was made for him.
 - it is his humility that he is not complete without woman.

 - it is the woman's glory to know that she alone can complete the man.
 - it is her humility to know that he rules over her.

Acceptance of these God-given roles leads to mutual esteem.
Mutual esteem protects existing love, and causes it to grow.
Happiness is found in God's way.

- **They are to cleave to each other.** Genesis 2:24.
 - this cleaving is only to take place in the total-giving of marriage.
 - it is God's way by which the mystery of two becoming one takes place.
 - it is: - not a necessary evil
 - but a God-given and holy pleasure
 - speaking of a couple's total commitment to each other in the whole of life together.
- **They are to subdue and replenish the earth.** Genesis 1:28-29.
 - God's norm is that married life should become family-life
 - and that family-life should be the basic unit of all human life.

God's Will For the family

3. Wives

We have seen what God's Word teaches about marriage.

We have seen the privileges & responsibilities partners share together.

Now we see what individual responsibilities partners have.

We start with wives, because Scripture usually does. (Ephesians 5:22, Colossians 3:18)

What is the

- Which means to yield humble and intelligent obedience to an ordained power or authority.

- **There are keyword ?**

"**Submission**" many passages about woman's relation to man.

All of them bring out this aspect:

1 Corinthians 11:3-16, Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18-19. 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

Creation demands it.

Redemption does not cancel it, but underlines it. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

1. **What sort of submission?**

a. **As unto the Lord. Ephesians 5:22 Colossians 3:18.**

- the godly woman recognises that the Divine pattern is that man should lead and rule, and woman should follow.
- the Fall emphasised this. Genesis 3:16.
- the man is just as much the woman's head, as Christ is his head. 1 Corinthians 11:3.
- this even applies to women with unconverted husbands. 1 Peter 3:1.

b. **In everything. Ephesians 5:24.**

- in every sphere of life.
- just as much as the Church is to be subject to Christ.

Not to accept this position of submission is the same as accusing God of lack of wisdom; and is to suggest that the Church need not obey Christ either.

But remember:

- this submission does not suggest that woman is inferior, as we saw last week - but it is God's order.
- where a man asks his wife to break a clear Scriptural command, she is not bound to obey. Acts 5:29, ("As is fitting" Colossians 3:18)

- it is God's will that the only men to whom a woman should submit should be a certain sort of man. Colossians 3:19. How happy that marriage where both partners live by God's Word!

2. What are the blessings of such submission?

a. The manifestation of Christ

Because wherever His commandments are kept, He is manifested, and particularly in this point. John 14:21-23. Ephesians 5:22-33.

b. Protection

Women are more vulnerable than men - physically, emotionally, spiritually. (see Genesis 3:16, James 1:27, 1 Timothy 2:12-14).
Where women submit, the men take the knocks, and the women are protected.

c. Harmony.

Conflict is caused by dispute about who is head.
Where Scripture is obeyed, this is avoided. 1 Corinthians 11:3

d. Spiritual power.

There is such power in submission, that by submission alone a woman may win her unconverted husband 1 Peter 3:1.

Where there is submission God is pleased, holiness is found, and prayers are answered. 1 Peter 3:1-7.

- ❖ Women who live by this teaching will be a blessing to husband, children, church and nation.
- ❖ In adopting God's ways they should not be forgetful that God has also given an outward sign of this submission - read thoughtfully 1 Corinthians 11:3-16.
- ❖ Husbands have no right to expect their wives to live by God's Word, unless they do so first. (See next week).
- ❖ In adopting God's ways they should not be forgetful that God has given an outward sign that man is the head of the woman - read thoughtfully 1 Corinthians 11:3-16.

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4. Husbands

We are continuing to talk about the individual responsibilities that partners have.

1. What is the keyword ?

"Love"

- Ephesians 5:25, 28 & 33, Colossians 3:19.
- as wives were told to 'submit', you would expect that the keyword for men would be 'rule'. But this is not so.
- the husband is to rule, but it is his responsibility to love which God's Word emphasises

2. What sort of love ?

Husbands are to love their wives "even as Christ also loved the church". But the church is not remote from Christ, but mysteriously united to Him. A husband and wife are also mysteriously united - "one flesh".

So men are also to love their wives "as their own bodies" (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Realistic love

- not starry eyed romance, which dies away
- something that requires work, effort, and often tears
- measured not by how a man feels towards his wife, but by how he behaves towards her

Forgiving love

- fully aware of sin and weakness in the partner.
- yet not bitter, or harsh. Colossians 3:19
- but, in fact, the opposite. Proverbs 31:28-29

Providing love

- the Church looks to Christ alone for all that it needs. The husband is the God-ordained provider for the family.
- it is not a disgrace to be poor, but it is a disgrace for the lust of a good standard of living to set aside God's order for the family

Pastoral love

- the nourishing and cherishing of Ephesians 5:29 means that the husband is responsible for his wife's spiritual welfare, as well as physical
- as head of the family he must give an account for the state of his household
- his love is purposeful. He cares for her growth in holiness, and tries to help her to become all that God intends her to be.
- his own mouth will teach her what he has learned in the church for her spiritual welfare. 1 Corinthians 14:35

Ruling love

- only the One who gave Himself for the Church has the right to rule it. So it is with husband and wife.
- this position is put into his hands by God, not by men.
- but this rule must never forget the principles of 1 Peter 3:7

In short, SACRIFICIAL LOVE

- not a man lusting for what he can get, but delighting to give, even himself. "Love seeketh not her own".
- a man like Christ, pleasing not himself. (1 Corinthians 11:3)
- a man, like Christ, living under his appointed head.
- a man, constantly giving up his pride, his self-will, his rights, because his chief concern is the good of the one that he loves.

3. What are the blessings of a husband's love and a wife's submission ?

All that we said at the end of last week's talk.

But we should also stress:-

- ❖ A beautiful and powerful picture of the relationship that Christ has with the Church is set forth in the home day by day.
- ❖ The children of the home are more likely to have happy and Scriptural marriages when their turn comes (as we shall see in future weeks).

"As for God, His way is perfect"

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5. Children

We talk to children before parents because the Word of God often does.

Ephesians 6:1-3, Colossians 3:20.

Once parents understand what God asks and expects children to be, they will instantly be better parents,

By "children" we mean all unmarried young people still dependent (some more, some less) on their parents.

1. What is the keyword ?

"Obey"

Ephesians 6:1-3, Colossians 3:20 and see Exodus 20:12.

2. What sort of obedience ?

a. **Complete and unquestioning.** Ephesians 6:1-3, Colossians 3:20.

- It does not say "Obey your parentswhen they are right"
- It says "Obeyfor this is right!"
- They are to be obeyed even when they are wrong. The child who obeys, even then, will bask in the sunshine of God's approval.

b. **"In the Lord".** _Ephesians 6:1.

- Children are to be aware that GOD has given their parents authority over them. They stand in the place of God to the child, and are not free to back out of this responsibility. To obey them is to please Him. Colossians 3:20
- Therefore to disobey them is an act of rebellion against GOD. Disobedience to parents is an iniquitous and wicked sin of the worst kind. See Exodus 21:17 Deuteronomy 21:18-21, Matthew 15:4.

c. **Aware that God rewards it.** Ephesians 6:1-3.

- The fifth commandment carries a promise!
- If you obey it, it will go "well with thee".
- And there are wider benefits too (as we shall now see).

3. What are the blessings of such obedience ?

❖ Obey - and make spiritual progress.

- To disobey is to sin, so your walk with God will be clouded and spoiled. Ephesians 6:1, Isaiah 59:1-2.
- To obey is to be Christ like. Luke 2:51-52, 1 John 2:6.

❖ Obey - and be happy.

- for obedience is linked to blessedness. Psalm 1, 19:11.
- the child's part is simply to obey; God has relieved him of shouldering the responsibility of the family, or making its decisions. What relief to a young person!

❖ Obey - and enjoy freedom,

- From the earliest times the Devil has suggested there can be no freedom where there are rules. Genesis 3. But God All-Wise contradicts this. Psalm 119:44-45 (Compare driving on the road).
- Parents only usually make unreasonable restrictions when they do not trust their child. Obedience builds up trust!

❖ Obey - and grow up!

- Only in an atmosphere of obedience is there perfect spiritual, intellectual and physical development. Luke 2:52-52.

❖ Obey - and be strong.

- A person who learns to obey does things because a God-ordained authority says so, not because the fancy takes him.
- Later in life he does things on the ground of principle, not because of some passing whim. He becomes strong morally - not easily led, wishy-washy, afraid to say NO.
- Eli's sons were not taught to obey, and became wayward. 1 Samuel 3:13-14. Most lives which end in ruins are the result of youthful disobedience. It is a fact.
- Unless you buckle to, and learn to obey NOW, you will be WEAK ALWAYS

❖ Obey - and be a leader.

- This follows from the point above.
- It is a Biblical principle that no-one can lead who has not first learned to obey. Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 2:10, Luke 7:8.
 - the worthwhile parents and Christian leaders of the future will be the young people of today who are OBEYING AT HOME.
 - the ruined homes and liabilities of the future church will be the young people who are not COMPLETELY obedient at home.

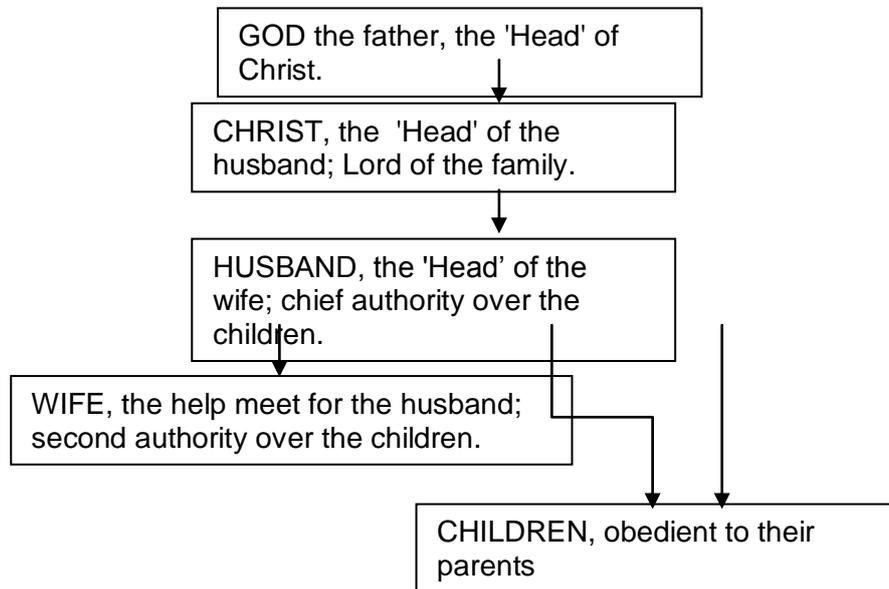
Disobedience always leaves disaster behind it.

Obedience always leaves blessing! See Romans 5:19.

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6. Parents

We have seen that God's order is loving husbands, submissive wives, and obedient children. This, plus 1 Corinthians 11:3, gives us God's complete pattern for the family:-



Based on
L Christensen

1. The position of parents.

- The chart above makes this clear, and also explains why the Scriptures address 'Fathers' when they are outlining the position of parents. Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21, Proverbs - often.
- Notice that the parents link the child and Christ. In this sense parents are 'mediators'. The influences of God are brought to bear on the children through the parents more than any other way.

To the children:

- ❖ **They are to be prophets**
 - Deuteronomy 6:6-9.
 - not only formally, but in the interchange of family-life they are to relate God's Word to every situation.
- ❖ **They are to be priests**
 - being patient with the children's ignorance and mistakes Hebrews 5:2. Colossians 3:21.
 - bearing them up in prayer. Job 1:1-5. 1 Peter 3:7
- ❖ **They are to be kings**
 - ruling the children, aware of the authority GOD has given to them in the family circle. (see last week's references and talk).
 - also Genesis 18:19, 1 Timothy 3:4-5,12. Titus 1:6.

2. The task of parents.

This also is clearly defined in God's Word.

Proverbs 22:6 - **Children are to be 'hedged in' and 'narrowed down'** into the way that they should go, WHILE THEY ARE STILL CHILDREN.

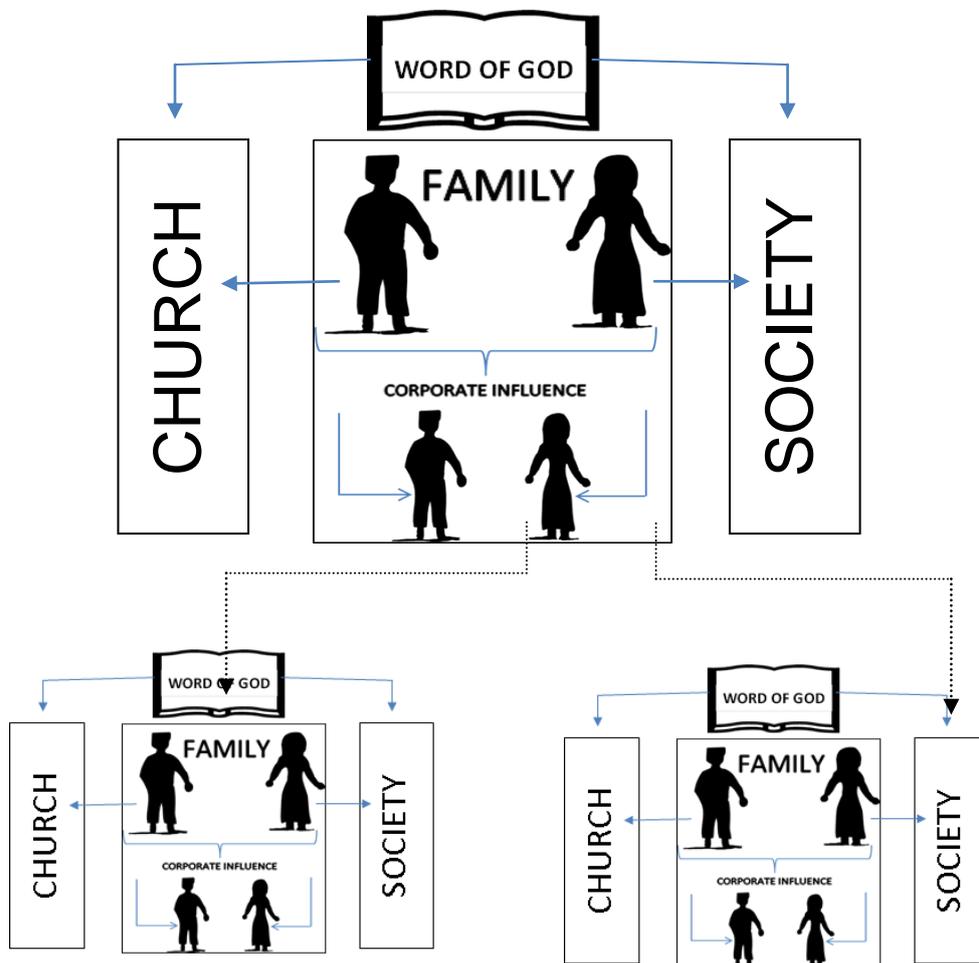
Ephesians 6:4 - **They are to be built up in a certain manner**, until their potential is realised. They are to be trained to go God's way by love, teaching and discipline.

Luke 2:51 - **Care is to be taken to train them**

- spiritually
- mentally
- physically
- socially

In short:

Parents are to train their children NOW,
to walk in God's ways in family-life,
church life and life in society.



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God's Will For the family

7. The discipline of children

We must not approach this subject in isolation.

All that we have learned so far in this series must be clearly in our minds.

For discipline is something which takes place in the total family situation.

Discipline springs from the fact that parents are to rule their children - to be 'kings' to them. God's Word has a great deal to say on this subject.

1. What a child is.

Once we know what he is, we will know how he is to be brought up

A creature of God

- whom God has constituted to go through the stages of babyhood; infancy; childhood; adolescence to maturity
- The characteristics he manifests as he matures (total dependence; pliability; restlessness; questioning etc.) are part of his divinely-ordained make-up

A sinner against God

- see Romans 5:12-18, Mark 7:18-23, Psalms 51:5, Proverbs 22:15.
- he is a guilty sinner; he does not become one at some 'age of accountability'.
- his anger, pride, lying and rebellion are not just 'a stage he is passing through'; but are manifestations of his sinful nature.

Once a parent recognises that his child is these TWO things:-

- He will make allowances for what is natural to his child as a creature. This will keep him from over-harshness.
- He will recognise the child's sins for the wicked things that they are. This will keep him from over-softness

2. What discipline is.

Discipline is a means of grace to put a child on the road to true blessedness.

- True blessedness is living within God's prescribed limits. Genesis 1 & 2.
- But a child by nature is against God.
- Despite this rebellion he must be taught to bow to God-constituted authority: to do what he ought to do, not what he wants to do.
- Verbal reproof and corporal punishment are GOD'S appointed way of helping him in this direction. Proverbs 22:6, 15.

This is how God deals with us:-

- It is his will that we should be partakers of His holiness, without which we will not see Him. Hebrews 12:10, 14.
- He loves us, and takes steps to bring about this holiness by disciplining us. Hebrews 12:5-10.
- The means that He uses are verbal reproof and chastening/scourging. Hebrews 12:5.

So it is not a means of vengeance - but a means of grace.

Not done out of hate - but done out of true and abiding love.

See also Revelations 3:19 and Ephesians 6:4 (RV).

NOT to use these two appointed way of discipline is to sin against the God of the Scriptures; and against your children.

3. What the manner of the discipline is to be.

In God's Name	GOD expects us to discipline the self-will in our children. It is not something we may or may not choose to do. The consequences lie with Him. Our part is to obey HIM. This gains respect.
Lovingly	Discipline is a sign of ownership, and conveys concern. The reverse is also true. Proverbs 13:24, 29:15. Hebrews 12:6-8.
Firmly	Enough to impress upon the child the wickedness of his offence. Psalms 89:31-33. Proverbs 19:18. Hebrews 12:11. He must have a <u>healthy fear</u> of God-constituted authority.
Reasonably	Taking into account his creaturely development. Psalm 103:9-14, Colossians 3:21. And the seriousness of the offence.
Consistently	If a child sins he must know that punishment is <u>certain</u> . Chastening is as extensive as love, and the child must be equally certain of it. Proverbs 13:24.
Prayerfully	No means is automatic. Parents must pray that the God-appointed means of discipline will have the God-intended effect. Proverbs 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15.

Such discipline is to be the first response, not the last resort.

It is God's gift for the welfare of all.

Where discipline breaks down in the home, it breaks down in society at large;
and the possibility of even a God-fearing society is put further away from us.

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8. The spiritual nurture of children

We have seen that the influences of God are brought to bear upon the children through the parents, more than any other way.

Parents are to be prophets (and priests) to their children.

But HOW is this to be done?

Important principles

Children are sinners, with a natural aversion to God. (See last week)

Romans 5:12-18. Matthew 18:10-14.

Children can savingly believe. Matthew 18:6. Ephesians 1:1, 6:1-3. Colossians 1:1. 3:20.

Faith is brought about by THE WORD. Romans 10:17.

Parents who want their children to believe, therefore, will bring them up and nurture them on THE WORD OF GOD.

To nurture a child properly is to teach him the WORD properly.

How is this to be done?

1. The atmosphere of the home.

- It must be a home built on the Biblical pattern outlined in this series.
- It is to be a home where God's Word is taught at every turn, and related to every situation. Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 11:18-21.

Every facet of life is to be viewed in the light of the teaching of God's Word.

For example:-

- at the meal table, Grace, Conversation (whatever the topic)
- decisions about family-life - routine; dress; diet; clothes; holidays etc...
- when sin has to be disciplined.
- trouble - in the family, church, neighbourhood, world.
- children's difficulties or fears.
- personal decisions, guidance.
- leisure, books, programmes, money, friends. etc. etc.

ALL to be seen in the light which the Scripture sheds.

Coupled with direct, specific, believing and thankful prayer.

This means - the family must spend TIME together -often!

- no living-out arrangements. (boarding school, sleeping at neighbour's homes etc.)
- openness must be regarded as an essential family feature.

2. Formal teaching.

Family-worship

- This was practised by God's people before Tabernacle, Temple or synagogue arose, and was continued in New Testament days, and through the best days in Church History. Genesis 18, 19. Deuteronomy 4:9-10.
- We believe it should be daily; worshipful; teaching one main lesson; involving all; and not unduly lengthy.

Catechising

- This is the teaching of Scripture in a way to be remembered (with an emphasis on systematic, thoroughly-taught doctrine) Proverbs 22:6.
- The early church had formal catechisms. 2 Timothy 1:5, 13, 3:14-17, Hebrews. 5:1.
- See the history of Revivals!

Public worship

- Children were present to hear the Word in Old Testament times. Exodus 10:9, Joshua 8:35, Ezra 10:1.
- Children were present to hear the Word in the New Testament churches. Ephesians 6:1. Colossians 3:20.
- The children of believers and believing children should be present when the Word is preached to the Church today!
 - preaching is the giving of God's Word to the whole church, not just part of it.
 - It is not Scriptural to deny God-given ordinances to some people just because we consider them 'too young'. (To listen to preaching is the height of worship. On what grounds do we deny THAT to our youngsters??)
 - Scripture thinks in terms of families being present when the Word is preached.
 - our talk about other arrangements being 'more suitable' are modernistic. (We decided it without Biblical warrant).
 - the best training for listening to preaching is - listening to preaching!
 - preaching is a God-given ordinance to bring about godliness -even in children!
 - we have evangelistic responsibilities to other children, which make special meetings desirable for them. Our own children should be encouraged to go to these. But NOT at the expense of attending the public worship of God's Church locally

For their own eternal welfare
For the sake of the future

- We must spiritually nurture our children