

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE TRAINING PROCESS—FATHERS

*Hear, my son, your father's instruction,*  
Prv 1:8a

## THE TRAINING PROCESS—MOTHERS

*And do not forsake your mother's teaching;*  
Prv 1:8b

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*Scripture Memory Verse—Prv 1:8*

*“Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake  
your mother's teaching;”*

## Chapter Seven

### The Training Process—Fathers

### The Training Process—Mothers

### —Bible Study

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching;

Prv 1:8

## INTRODUCTION

This study presupposes a conviction on the part of the parents that the Bible is: the Word of God; divinely inspired; and inerrant. This study also presupposes that the parent accepts this inerrancy as it applies to teachings on the family. As such, certain principles are accepted as being *from God and not man*.

- A. Eph 5:23 *For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body*—that the husband is head of the wife and as such head of the family.
- B. Eph 5:24 *But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything*—that the wife is willingly subject to her husband.
- C. Eph 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her*—that the husband puts the wife above all things, save God, and assures her a position of love and honor in the home, sacrificing even his own life if need be.
- D. Eph 6:1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right*—that the children of the family are to obey their parents, both father and mother.
- E. Eph 6:2 *Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise*—that the children of the family are to extend to their parents, both father and mother, the honor which is due this position as ordained by God.

2 Tm 3:16,17 states—“*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*” This extends to the family as well as to all aspects of Christian life and service. In this chapter, we will look at the unique role of the father and mother in the training of their children as divinely ordained by God through His Holy Word—which is both inspired and inerrant. As such, it is profitable for teaching us to be good parents, for reproofing us in our failures as parents, for correcting us when we err as parents, for training us to be righteous parents, and for equipping us for every work we may find necessary in our parenting skills.

What follows is:

1. A brief study from the Word of God to aid you in understanding the subject matter of this chapter.
2. A manuscript is provided for you to read together and discuss.
3. Practical projects for discussion and application are provided to aid you in implementing those areas of the seminar which meet your needs as a parent.

**Bible Study****PARENTING ROLES**

*My son, observe the commandment of your father,  
and do not forsake the teaching of your mother;*

Prv 6:20

***The Word of God places the father uniquely as the head of the family. He is the spiritual leader of the home.***

***A. According to Eph 5:22–24, “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.”***

1. What is the husband's/father's role?

2. How is the wife to respond to her husband?

***B. Although head of the home, the father does not occupy the place of honor by himself. How do the following verses speak to this?***

1. Eph 6:2 Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise,

**2. Ex 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.**

**3. Dt 5:16 Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you.**

**4. Mt 15:4 For God said, "Honor your father and mother," and, "He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death."**

**5. Prv 15:20 A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother**

**6. Prv 19:26 He who assaults his father and drives his mother away Is a shameful and disgraceful son.**

**7. Prv 20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.**

**8. Prv 23:22 Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.**

**9. Prv 28:24 He who robs his father or his mother, And says, "It is not a transgression," Is the companion of a man who destroys.**

**10. Prv 30:17 The eye that mocks a father, And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.**

**C. Although the father is the head of the home, he is not the sole focus of obedience. How do the following verses establish this as true?**

1. Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
2. Prv 1:8 Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake your mother's teaching;
3. Prv 6:20 My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;
4. Prv 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.
5. Prv 31:1 The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him.
6. 2 Tm 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,



# Fathers

***Eph 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and Col 3:21, Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.***

1. To which of the parents is the Word of God speaking?
  
2. What is the expectation of the Word of God toward this parent?

*Title:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Read Heb 12:5–11, answer the questions, and then, title the section.*

...and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “*My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.*” It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

**To whom does God compare Himself?**

**What primary characteristic does God say He shares with earthly fathers?**

**What type of child does not receive discipline?**

**What is the initial result of discipline?**

**What is the long-term result of discipline?**

**What will the child who is not disciplined by his father think when he reads “But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons?”**

**How will an undisciplined child’s understanding of God’s love be distorted?**

**Does our heavenly Father view discipline as inconsistent with His love for His children?**

**Does God view discipline as inconsistent with a father’s love for his child?**

**Father, how would you rate your involvement in the disciplining of your children**



## MOTHERS

**A. Consider both Eph 6:1 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” and Col 3:20 “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.” What should be the response of children to their mothers?**

*B. In the following passages, what is the expectation of God concerning the mother / child relationship?*

**Prv 1:8 Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake your mother's teaching;**

**Prv 6:20 My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;**

*C. How is this illustrated in the following passages?*

**2 Tm 1:5; 3:14–15 “For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”**

**Acts 16:1–3 “And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”**

*Title:* \_\_\_\_\_

*A. In the following passages...*

***Prv 14:1 “The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.”***

***Prv 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”***

***Prv 23:13–14 “Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, And deliver his soul from Sheol.”***

Are they addressed specifically to either mother or father?

What then are we to assume about their application?

***Prv 29:15,17 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul.***

Are these passages directed to a specific parent?

What, then, are we to assume about their application?

Moms only! How would you evaluate your willingness to discipline and train your children?

*Title:* \_\_\_\_\_

*How do I react to the following verses?*

**1 Cor 11:9** “For indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.”

**1 Tm 2:12** “But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”

**Eph 5:22** “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”

**Col 3:18** “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

**Gn 2:18** “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’ ”

## Lecture— Chapter Seven

### The Training Process—Fathers

*Hear, my son, your father's instruction,*  
Prv 1:8a

### The Training Process—Mothers

*And do not forsake your mother's teaching;*  
Prv 1:8b

#### I. HEAD OF THE FAMILY

The Word of God places the father Uniquely as the Head of the family he is the head of the wife. Eph 5:22–24 clearly states: “*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*”

In this passage, wives are enjoined to be “subject to their own husbands as to the Lord.” The passage goes on to compare the headship of the husband to the wife, to that of the headship of Christ to the Church. Next, the redemptive role of this headship is stressed with the closing admonition that this headship, this authority, extends to all areas.

*“And these words, which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

Dt 6:6–9

#### A. HONOR AND OBEDIENCE IS DUE BOTH PARENTS

The Word of God makes it clear that honor and obedience are due to both parents. As far as the children go, in the area of obedience and honor, there is no “pecking order.” Eph 6:1–3 states clearly, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.*”

In this passage, obedience and honor is due to both parents. It is not enough for one or the other to receive the respect, honor and obedience, but rather both. The children may regard neither the father, nor the mother as a second-class citizen if the blessing of God is to be upon their lives and the life of the family.

Similarly, Col 3:20 states, “*Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.*” The obedience of the children is due to the parents, both father and mother.

## B. THE FATHER'S HEADSHIP WITH REGARD TO THE CHILDREN

It is the father's position of headship that this passage in Ephesians emphasizes. In Eph 6:4, God ends by stressing, "*And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*"

Here we see that the Father is not to abuse his position as given to him by the Lord, by purposefully and willfully provoking his children to anger through cruel or unreasonable treatment of them or their mother. Rather, his duty is to bring them up, to raise them, to train them, in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This is stressed again in Col 3:21 where the Word of God exhorts, "*Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.*"

The authority of the father does not diminish the authority of the mother, but assures it. As previously stated in Eph 6:1, Children are to obey their "parents," plural—father and mother. This is not a new concept in Scripture. The role of the mother in teaching and training the children has a strong precedent throughout Scripture.

It was Samuel's mother, Hannah, who took the initiative of bringing him to the Temple and presenting him for training. In Prv 31:1 we read, "*The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him.*" Evidently, the Lord felt the mother was just as worthy a receptacle for imparting His Holy Word to King Lemuel as was his father. And again, in the life of Timothy, Paul's key disciple and pastor of the church of Ephesus. The Word of God states, "*For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.*" We see a consistent theme in Scripture of the mother's role in the spiritual development of the children.

It is the father, though, in his unique position of headship, who ensures that the children are obedient and a blessing to the mother. In Prv 31:28, the Word of God states, "*Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her.*" It is the father who is placed by God as the head and given the role of bringing the children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. The mother shares in this, but in the Scripture, it is ultimately done under the authority and direction of the father.

Although secular training outside the home has a long history both in the secular and biblical realms, spiritual training outside the home and apart from the father's oversight is

*The contrast of experience that is brought about by the father faithfully fulfilling his role was never more evident to me than in the family lives of Mike and Linda vs. Tom and Sherry. Mike was a faithful father and served sacrificially as the spiritual head of his home. During his graduate studies, and in his career, there was never any question in Linda's mind as to Mike's commitment both to her and to the children. After work, he was home and involved in the children's lives, disciplining and instructing them so faithfully that they were a wonderful blessing to Linda: obedient, cooperative and honoring to her. As a result, when Linda became pregnant with her fifth child, it was a cause for rejoicing in her life. She did not see it as a burden or as a millstone around her neck. Because of Mike's headship and their teamwork, the children were indeed a blessing from the Lord.*

*With Tom and Sherry, though, it was a completely different story. When Sherry became unexpectedly pregnant with her fifth child, she collapsed into a depression which left her almost completely immobilized. Tom was a mature Christian, successful businessman, Christian author and speaker... frequently quoted in the media. Yet, his involvement in the home was minimal. His children were resentful, and beyond his wife's control. His treatment of his wife before his children was less than honoring and they followed suit. The thought of another uncontrolled, dishonoring child was more than Sherry could bear. To her, her life was coming to an end, as she was being dragged down by disobedient children. If only Tom has seen his role more clearly. If only Tom had given himself to his family the way Mike had done. Then, his wife would have rejoiced with the prospect of this new child. As it was, she was placed in the awkward position of viewing what should have been a blessing as a curse.*

a relatively new phenomenon. Both in ancient culture and in the Scripture, it was unthinkable for the children's spiritual instruction to be relegated to relative strangers. The sad state of many Christian homes today where the spiritual training of the children is relegated by the father completely to the mother is not an option presented in the Word of God. Fathers *should* include the mother in the training process at every level. Fathers *should not* delegate this role completely to the mother.

Many fathers must rethink what they view as masculine and feminine. Christian men may no longer rely on the prevailing cultural norms, either within or without the church, to make these distinctions. The Word of God must be our beacon as we chart our course in this area. For many men, prayer groups are feminine, yet the Word of God clearly states in 1 Tm 2:8 *"Therefore I want the men in every place to pray."* Again, service activities in the church, such as serving the pot luck dinner at a church activity and doing the dishes afterwards is seen by many men as a feminine task, yet the Word of God says in Acts 6:1–3, *"Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.'"*

In the same way, many men view the instruction and training of children as "women's work." This could not be further from the truth. The Word of God places the father as the head of the family and personally responsible for the discipline and instruction of the children. If culture or time has eroded the perceived value of this role or has attempted to relegate it to a lower position or some third party, then this is a problem with the culture. We should allow our perceptions and convictions to be guided not by culture, but by the Word of God.

## II. Fathers And The Training Process

### A. THE WORD OF GOD AND THE FATHER

Children are instructed to listen to and obey their fathers: *"Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord,"* Col 3:20; and *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,"* Eph 6:1. Conversely, fathers are instructed to discipline and train the children entrusted to their care. Over and over, in Scripture, we find the admonition given to fathers to instruct their children. Over and over, in Scripture, we find the admonition given to children to listen to and to obey the instructions of their fathers, as in Prv 4:1 *"Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding."* What will your son's response be when he reads scriptures such as this? Will he picture you as the father, being the primary source of spiritual and personal instruction in his life? Or will his response be, "Geeze, I wonder what that means. My father is a fine Christian, but I don't remember him giving me instruction for understanding. Orders, yes, but we never had anything that approached a student/teacher relationship. It must just be figurative or something."

The Word of God clearly states that children are to accept the discipline rendered by their father and those neglecting to do so are regarded as fools. Conversely fathers are instructed to discipline their children faithfully and those who fail to do so are functioning as a fornicator would to an illegitimate child. The Word of God states bluntly that, *"A wise son accepts his father's discipline, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke,"*

Prv 13:1. Conversely, “...if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons,” Heb 12:8. What will your son’s response be when he reads these passages from the Scriptures? Is there discipline for him to wisely accept from you? Will he reflect on your relationship with him and come to the conclusion that you have related to him in this area as if he were an illegitimate child?

It is the father's loving discipline of the child that God deems to compare Himself with. The Word of God develops this theme in Heb 12:7–10. “*It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*” Here, God clearly develops the theme that fathers discipline their sons. It is an act of love born out of the unique commitment which a father feels towards his progeny. The thought of a father not disciplining his son is so absurd that it is contrasted with the relationship of a fornicator to an illegitimate child. “*Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness,*” Heb. 12:9–10.

The child is seen as respecting the father for this discipline. The fathers did it for “a short time” and in a way that seemed “best to them.” In the same way, God disciplines us “for our good” that we might “share in His Holiness.” God compares His discipline of our lives, for our success, with our earthly fathers. When your child reads through these passages, how will he reflect on his relationship with you as his father? As his mind begins to conform to the scriptural norm, how will he begin to perceive your role in his life? If later in life, he were to teach this passage from the pulpit, in a Sunday school class or Bible study, what position would he find himself in? One of not having useful illustrations and having to explain away your role, or one of rich and meaningful illustrations as he shared how lovingly his earthly father disciplined and trained him? Will it then be easy for him as an adult, to understand and receive the discipline and instruction of his heavenly Father?

In shaping our approach to discipline, God is careful to stress His commitment to disciplining us for our success and not punishing us for our wrongs as the rule. All the punishment due us fell on Christ at the Cross. This leaves God free to discipline us for success. In the same way, we as earthly fathers do not punitively punish our children in anger, but rather, discipline them for their own good and success. Col 3:21 admonishes fathers, “*Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.*” Again, in Eph 6:4, fathers are instructed, “*And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*” In both cases, the key to not exasperating the child, thus causing him to lose heart, or to not provoking the child to anger, is for you to be consistent and loving in your discipline as his earthly father.

Do not be angry, mean or cruel in your words, vindictive in your statements or mannerisms, nor manipulative or controlling in your methods, but rather discipline and train your child in a loving way for his future success and independence. These passages do not mean that we are to refrain from any discipline or action which angers or exasperates the child. To do this, we would have to completely abrogate our parenting to the child’s likes and dislikes. Rather, it speaks to willful cruelty when it comes to discipline. The goal of discipline is the success of our children. It is not to punish, nor to “get even.” The child may react with exasperation or anger initially, but this is never our

goal. As foolishness is driven out of the child, the child will react more and more in sorrow and repentance, and less and less in anger and exasperation.

It is the fathers to whom the Word of God specifically speaks with regard to the raising and disciplining of children. It is the fathers to whom this responsibility is given. The capricious nonresident father will not do—here one day, gone the next. The father who disciplines the child when finally provoked to anger, but does not lovingly share in the child’s day-to-day life is not doing his job. The child’s success is one long series of projects devised by a father whom he little knows and little sees apart from his authoritarian position. The life-on-life relationship is not there, nor is the close friendship. The father does not feel this loss, but the child feels it keenly. Our commitment to our earthly children must extend beyond reports by Mom as we walk through the door or after the kids are in bed. Our commitment must be based on a relationship in which we are intimately involved.

The historical revelation of the Word of God is full of God’s anger towards negligent fathers who did not act decisively in this area, as well as the terrible results in the lives of their children. Interestingly enough, most of these accounts center around the lives of otherwise Godly men. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Eli, Samuel, David, Solomon—all these and more are recorded in Scripture. These are men whose great accomplishments in the name of God are overshadowed by their failures at home. They are men who, in their prime, should have been rejoicing in their spiritual victories in the ministry were mourning the personal tragedies in their home life. Illustrations from Scripture abound... *“Now Jacob heard that [Shechem] had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent...”* Gn 34:5. Jacob, to his own sorrow, kept silent in the face of this action and would pay for his silence with having to flee from a very prosperous land.

*“For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them,”* 1 Sm 3:13. Eli had brought revival to the land, but all this would be lost due to the fact that he failed to discipline his sons.

*“His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, ‘Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations,’”* 1 Sm 8:3–5. Samuel had successfully returned Israel to the rule of judges, which the Lord had set up, but this will be lost because of his failure to discipline his sons.

*“Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, ‘I will be king.’ So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him. And his father (David) had never crossed him at any time by asking, ‘Why have you done so?’ And he was also a very handsome man; and he was born after Absalom,”* 1 Kg 1:5–6. Again and again, David paid for his silence in regard to his children’s sins by losing what ground he gained in his obedience to God.

As you reflect on these Scriptures and the behavior of your children, can you see a pattern in your life of putting off dealing with issues in your children’s lives? Like these men, have you become so preoccupied, so worn down with the work of life, or even of God, that you do not have time for the ministry at home which God has given you? Like a frog in a kettle who slowly gets used to the heat as it is increased slowly to boiling and finally dies without ever jumping out, are you slowly getting used to behavior levels in



your children, which at one time, you would have scorned had you seen them in another's family?

I often share with staff whom I have the privilege of mentoring what I call the "Christmas Rule." It goes something like this. In my life and ministry I have found that if a person I am ministering to turns away from the Lord, or a project I am working on in the ministry goes bad, or if the fruit in the ministry is not as bountiful as I would like, I experience real disappointment, even grief, but it does not ruin my Christmas. As I sit at the dinner table on Christmas Eve with my family and we sit in the living room on Christmas morning, all is well as we rejoice together in the birth of our Lord and share our love. On the other hand, if I am estranged from one of my children, if the relationship is broken, if they are far from the Lord, if they have chosen, for this reason, not to be with us on Christmas... then that *would* ruin my Christmas.

As we sit at the table on Christmas Eve, if there is a vacant chair, left empty by a bitter or estranged child, and as we sit in the living room to share gifts on Christmas morning, if there is a missing child due to bitterness or broken fellowship, then this would indeed cast a shadow upon my Christmas. I will be disappointed in failures in the ministry or in individuals, but that will all be lost to me in the joy of my family at Christmas... but a child—that is another matter altogether. I have made many ministry decisions on the "Christmas Rule." Sure, turning down this opportunity will be disappointing, perhaps to me, but more likely to others, but it will not ruin my Christmas. In this case, I will choose my family and protect my Christmas."

Samuel, in 1 Sm 7:15–17, brought great revival to Israel. He restored the nation to the Lord under the rule of judges and yet, all this was lost to him because of the actions of his sons and the nation demanding a king.

David brought the nation of Israel together in a unified Kingship so that there was peace, yet because of his failure to discipline his sons the nation was continually wracked by civil war.

Solomon unified the nation and built it into an empire, yet because of his failure to impart wisdom into the life of his son, the nation of Israel split in two, never again to be unified under a king.

I have seen it time after time. Men intent on their careers, their ministry, their goals... failing to look back over their shoulder at the family. And when it is all over, their

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*Gordon, a friend of mine who is a dental surgeon, has to attend yearly conferences to maintain his board certification. These are held in such intellectual centers as Vail, Colorado; Cancun, Mexico; and Miami Beach, Florida. This particular one was held in Las Vegas. As he went from meeting room to meeting room, he noticed that there was a type of gambler that he found very intriguing. This man had lost all his money, and was hanging around the slot machines and tables, giving advice and gambling vicariously through others. Now Gordon was not a gambler, but he did mention to me, that if he was, the last man on earth he would take advice from was one who had lost all his chips.*

*In life we have three stacks of chips which I never gamble with. They are: My walk with God, my Family, and my Health. I have been around men who, like these compulsive gamblers, have lost all their chips. They still like the game, though, and hang around and give advice such as, "You can't be a good pastor and a good father... it is something you just have to give up to the Lord." Or, "In my position as executive of the multimillion dollar Christian ministry, I realized that I just was not going to be able to raise my kids like other fathers do. You can't have it all. You can't be a good father and a good leader at the same time." I never let men gamble with my chips, and particularly, I never, never, take advice from men who have gambled one or more of their stacks away.*

*I take advice, not from gamblers, but from investors. Men who started with small stacks, and through prudent stewardship and investment have parlayed them into a fortune. In fact, the roots of this seminar lie with them—not with the gamblers and their rationalizations concerning their personal failures before God as husbands and fathers.*

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successes are taken away. They are retired, a new pastor is called, a new regime is inserted and all they worked for is taken away. In the end, their family is in shambles and they are left with nothing.

## B. THE PHILOSOPHY

The success of all that we have studied thus far is dependent upon a radical and innovative philosophy. I don't know for sure how it will be received. I understand its radical nature and I am not sure how the Church as a whole will react to it. I am not sure how it will be viewed in the boardrooms and deaneries of the multimillion-dollar seminaries and Christian organizations that grace this land. In spite of that, I present it to you as follows—*The father, as head of the home, assumes the leadership and personal responsibility of disciplining and training his children.*

There it is. What do you think? Will it fly?

This, of course, presupposes certain conditions which are equally as radical...

### 1. THE FATHER IS AT HOME:

It is my observation that this transcends all else. In 1 Sm 7:16 the Scripture records of Samuel, *“And he used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all these places.”* Meanwhile the Word of God reveals of his sons, in the next chapter, *“His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice.”* It is very hard for a young man or woman to walk with God, to resist temptation, to deal with peer pressure when Dad is either physically or mentally gone from the home. With no head, things deteriorate and die. The father is the head of the home.”

Early in our marriage, I made a commitment to Eleanor that I would only commit one to two nights a week in my ministry/work schedule and that I would limit my week long mission trips/speaking schedule to three each year. A fellow minister, when hearing of this said, *“You can't have a ministry and spend that much time at home.”* My response was, *“That is not in the Bible.”* And you know what? It is not in the Bible. That is why I was able to have a very productive ministry as well as fulfill my responsibilities to God concerning my family. My compadre, because of accepting as gospel a doctrine which was not in the Bible, was only able to fulfill half of the responsibilities God gave him and ultimately he was reduced in effectiveness from even that.

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*“...Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.”*

Mt 15:9

*“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.”*

1 Ti 1:3

*“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.”*

1 Ti 4:1

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**Supervisor:** *“I don't see why you have to leave the conference early to go home!”*

**Me:** *“I will only be gone one day. I am assuming the cost of travel to make my time away as negligible as possible, but it is my daughter's birthday and I will be there for the family party.”*

**Supervisor:** *“Well why didn't you just celebrate her birthday before you left for the conference!”*

**Me:** *“Because it wasn't her Birthday.”*

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It was several years into my ministry before I realized the necessity of working within my God-given limitations. I had pushed myself and my family to the brink of destruction both economically, physically and emotionally and all in the name of the service of God. It was then that I decided to live within my limitations and to live with the results that God would give, given my limitations. I committed to only using ministry money for the ministry and not dipping into the family budget when the ministry money was not there. I committed myself to evening meals with the family seven days a week, to a maximum of two nights a week in the ministry, and to a consistent day off which I would spend with the family in family pursuits. I committed myself to be there, clothed and in my right mind and to take responsibility for my wife and children. I committed myself to being at home for all birthdays, my anniversary and the seven major holidays celebrated in the U.S. At times I received praise for this decision, other times it cost me promotions, ministry opportunities, and, on occasion, demotions. I have never looked back in regret at this decision and view it as a watershed in my faith and relationship with God.

## 2. THE FATHER KNOWS HIS CHILDREN:

Not just their names, but the details of their lives, such as what they like for Christmas or the activity that each one usually gets in trouble doing, but even beyond this, he knows their personalities, their gifts, their quirks etc. Think of your children. Now name each child's single greatest fear; their happiest moment; their primary spiritual gifts; the names of their best friends and favorite relatives; what they perceive as their greatest sin and their greatest spiritual victory. Now, ask yourself this, "Do I know my children?"

## 3. THE FATHER IS KNOWN BY HIS CHILDREN:

Have your children seen you laugh, cry, play, say, "I am sorry," make up with Mom after a fight? Have they seen you disappointed or depressed? Have they heard you share prayer requests concerning your fears, hopes and dreams, and prayed with you over these things?

*I was preparing to go to Kenya to speak at a Family Discipleship Conference. Stanley and Patience Mukolwe, the Navigator staff there, had gone to great lengths and sacrifices to prepare the conference for me. I was feeling very insecure as I knew that more than just my reputation was on the line, but Stanley had invested much of his own time and prestige in this. As I shared these fears and concerns with Becca, we had a*

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*As a young staff member, I was asked to join a leadership team which was quite prestigious given my age and experience. I was hesitant, though, because it required one week away from home each month at a minimum. The lure of the position was strong, as were the entreaties of my supervisor. At the first meeting it was decided that prayer requests would be shared. The first man, a seasoned missionary twice my age began to share and teared up as he related how his travels away from home while his children were young had created resentment and problems in the family with which he was still struggling. Each man in turned shared and wept with similar stories. That night I handed in my resignation and drove home to my family.*

*On the way home, I was wracked by questions and doubts. My supervisor had left no doubts in my mind where my future standing with him and the organization would be if I were to make so rash a move. I stopped about halfway home on the five hour drive at a coffee shop off the highway in Dallas. There, to my surprise, I was met by a fellow staff member and former missionary who was waiting for a businessmen to show up for Bible study. I related my experience. He hugged me, shook my hand, and confided that he wished he had done the same thing twenty years ago. In the ensuing years, the anonymity of my ministry was more than offset by the joy of my family.*

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*"The One who knows us best, loves us most..."*

Bill & Gloria Gaither

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great time together. Later that week as my family waited with me at the airport Becca, handed me a verse card with two promises she was claiming and a short note of encouragement. When I got home I laminated the card and still carry it with me. The more my children know me, the more they are able to love me. Do your children really know you?

#### 4. THE FATHER IS VISIBLY SUBMISSIVE TO AUTHORITY:

This includes spiritual leadership in the church, employers and supervisors at work, and governmental authority. What are you modeling in terms of how to respond to authority? Are any of your children's bad attitudes toward your authority learned by your actions toward others?

Eleanor and I were always careful not to criticize the Pastor, the youth minister, or the Sunday school teachers of our children. Our problems with public school officials and administration were always dealt with in private, unless they directly affected the children. It always surprised me to find parents who could not understand their children's disinterest in Sunday School or Youth activities, when I had heard these same parents criticizing or cluck, cluck, clucking about the shortcomings of activities and personnel. As hard as it was to bite our tongues when we heard or saw something we disagreed with, unless it was a glaring issue which jeopardized the spiritual or personal safety of our children, we held our tongue and instead tried to always praise and lift up those in authority over us and over our children.

*Chuck was a freshman in our campus ministry. His father was a successful Christian minister and I had been looking forward to Chuck's involvement. I was surprised to find Chuck to be a rigid and critical young man—toward his teachers, his Bible study leaders, the Christian organization I worked for, the local churches, the school administration and the classes. Nothing seemed to please Chuck, and he chafed under the spiritual or secular leadership under which he found himself.*

*The roots of this became clear when I met his father. He railed against the secular humanists, against the dead condition of the church, against the spiritual inadequacies of the para-church, against the pagan philosophies of the secular campus, against the sin in the government, against the spiritual shortcomings of the present administration. Like father, like son. As you reflect on Chuck's Dad, do you see*

*yourself?*  
*Gus was a fighter. He loved a good argument, and he loved to win. Most of all, though, win, lose or draw, he just loved a good fight. To Gus, everything was competitive and like most men of his temperament he married a noncompetitive wife. Gus was in a hard-hitting, competitive environment at work and he came home to several children who shared his temperament and not his wife's. Gus ran over his wife in every argument and was just a little disdainful of her vulnerability and defenselessness on the fields of family conflict.*

*I tried to warn Gus about the impact this was having on his children. He did not see it until it was too late. They had learned from him to take for granted, and even to disdain, the most precious person in their life—their mother. Having taken this step, nothing was precious to them, not church, not school and not Gus. The very thing Gus was most proud of in his life, caused him his greatest humiliation. What are your children learning from you about values as they observe your treatment of their mother?*

#### 5. THE FATHER HAS EARNED RESPECT THROUGH HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WIFE:

Your wife carried that little baby to term. She nursed the child and held him close. While you were at work, she fed, clothed and cared for the child. More than likely, she heard his first words, saw his first steps and cared for all of his first illnesses, bumps and bruises. Do you really think you can win by berating your wife in their presence? If you were to "win" by having your children join you in this, do you think that there is anything a child

can ever love or respect after being taught by the father's actions to disrespect the most caring, loving and sacrificial person to ever come into their life?

Ex 20:12 **Honor... your mother**, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

Dt 5:16 **Honor... your mother**, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you.

Mt 15:4 **For God said, "Honor your... mother,"** and, "He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death."

Mt 19:19 **Honor your... mother;** and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Eph 6:2 **Honor your... mother** (which is the first commandment with a promise).

## 6. THE FATHER IS OPEN AND AFFECTIONATE WITH HIS CHILDREN:

This takes two important manifestations. The first is praise and the second is physical affection. In terms of praise, it is important for every father to realize that there is a multi-billion dollar industry that exists for the sole purpose of convincing your child that he is homely, unpopular and dumb, and that if he will spend thousands of dollars each year on the products advertised the child will be pretty, popular and smart.

*Cliff was an acquaintance of mine from high school. My freshman year, he stole a car, smashed it into a guard rail going 90 mph, and died on the scene. His girl friend later told me that there was one thing that haunted Cliff. She said he would share it with her over and over again, especially when he had been drinking. The demon that haunted him? He could never remember his father ever saying, "I am proud of you."*

As a result there are certain things a child needs to hear every day from their father and, over the years I have tried to say these on a daily basis. Even now, as my children go off to college, in my weekly letters to them I reiterate these simple statements, "I love you," "I am proud of you," "You are smart," and "You are pretty/handsome." A child must hear these four things over and over, in every circumstance imaginable and in every creative way possible.

You are up against the greatest creative minds in the country, who have virtually unlimited access to your child and seemingly limitless resources with which to work. Despite this, a word of praise from a father is stronger than all that Madison Avenue can muster. Few fathers realize the power of their praise. Praise must be heaped upon the child. Praise their appearance, their intelligence, their crafts, and their sportsmanship. "Good job," "proud," "pretty/handsome," "smart," "thankful for you," and "love," are words and phrases that the child cannot hear too much from their father.

We have the example of God the Father...

Mt 3:17 *and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."*

Mt 12:18 *"Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles."*

Mt 17:5 *While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"*

## 7. NO DEROGATORY NICKNAMES IN THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

"Monkey Face," "Pumpkin Head," "Goofus," are all nicknames that I have seen fathers use to the subtle undermining of their children. All too soon, the children pick this up and begin calling each other names. Thus, the one place a child should be able to come to for refuge from the cruelty of the world, the one place the child should be able to look to to reinforce the beauty and uniqueness of their creation in God's image, the one place the child should be able to come to for the preservation of their self-image, becomes the one place where the most damage is done. No one can hurt you as badly as those whom you love or those who are supposed to love you. No one can pick a name that will do more damage to a child than a parent or sibling. Name calling in our home is instantly rewarded with the rod. The name we give our children is their Christian name. The name they carry in addition to this is their family name. These names are to be honored and protected, first by the child and then by their brothers and sisters.

## 8. NO CRITICIZING YOUR CHILD IN FRONT OF THEIR SIBLINGS OR FRIENDS

Coaching, training and criticizing your child in front of their brothers and sisters or friends is also out. I don't know how many times my child has thanked me for not being an "involved parent" on the playing field or stage in front of all their friends and friends' parents. When we are alone, I am an earnest coach, but in public I am their fan and nothing more.

*A parent who embraces this will be invited to offer advice and help. I can remember Sam telling me once, if not a hundred times, how thankful he was that I cheered but did not holler advice from the stands. I was surprised then when he asked me to stand behind the back stop and yell out a key word right before he stepped up to the plate. The batting coach had been working with him and he always left out that key element. He could trust me to shout that one word and no more. It was an honor to be invited to do this by my son, but one that was earned by keeping my mouth shut, except for words of encouragement, for years previous to this.*

## 9. THE FATHER IS NOT "ONE OF THE GUYS."

Your child wants you to be a parent when he is around his friends, not one of the gang. Your child does not want you to join in and take over when they are playing. His friends want you to treat them with respect, not like snot-nosed kids. Sam once told me that one of the reasons the kids liked to hang out at our house was that I was respectful and articulate with his friends. I spoke to them in a mature manner and gave them plenty of space. I would shake their hands, call them by name, ask a few questions pertaining to their likes and interests, just like they were young men and women and then back off. The general rule is, if you want to be included in your child's circle of friends, you have to learn to keep your mouth shut.

## 10. PHYSICAL AFFECTION

Physical affection is important and cannot be stressed enough. The hug, the kiss, holding hands, walking arm in arm, making your lap available at all times are essentials. Many fathers become withdrawn from their children as they enter that awkward transitional age and puberty. During this stage your son or daughter will jump back and forth between adulthood and childhood. Their hormones are bouncing off the walls. They are awkward and growing limbs disproportionately to their body. Pimples appear. Hygiene sometimes does not keep track of social skills. They tend to bump around and express themselves poorly. This is the time, when some fathers begin to feel awkward and threatened by this emerging adult, and pull back in terms of physical affection. This is the time, though, when this newly-emerging adult needs their fathers love and physical affection most. Push right past the feigned protests of your child. Push right past this and love your child openly and sincerely. Someone once asked me how things were with my two oldest teens. I replied, "My nineteen-year-old daughter calls me 'Daddy' and still wants to sit on my lap on occasion, and my seventeen-year-old son calls me his 'best buddy' and openly hugs me in public. Things could not be better."

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*Sam, at 17, was dropping me off for a mission trip to Africa, an early morning weekday flight. El had to get the kids off to school and Sam drew the airport run, which he could make and still get to his high school on time. The country was an Islamic dictatorship and very harsh to live in. He fussed over me as he got the bags out of the car and to the sky cap, not letting me lift them, prayed with me and then gave me a big hug and good-bye kiss on the cheek. As I entered the airport a distinguished looking businessman shook my hand and with a tear in his eye shared, "I would give anything in the world if my son would treat me like that," and then walked on to catch his flight.*

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## 11. THE FATHER SPENDS FREE TIME WITH THE CHILDREN:

Fun time with kids is important, and it must be what they consider fun, not just what you enjoy.

I have always tried to have a weekly date with the kids. Becca and Sam like it to be one on one while Megan and Liz have always liked to go together. These times do not have to cost anything and can be as simple as going to the park, shagging balls at the local baseball diamond, or window shopping in the mall. If, like many young couples, you are short of cash, there are a thousand and one free things to do wherever you live. To the children, the important thing is always getting to spend time with Dad.

When the kids were in elementary school, I always set aside a lunch each week to go and eat with them. This gave them great status as a kid. Anybody could get a mother to come eat, but a Dad... that was something special. Suddenly, everybody at the table needed help opening their milk, getting their drink. It was always great fun. Afterwards, I would go out on the playground for a bit before having to leave. Later, as the kids got into junior high and high school, it was not cool to have Dad eat with them in the cafeteria, but it was a real treat for me to check them out of school and take them to the local fast food restaurant to eat.

Spending free time with the children is important. Special dates, reading with the kids, playing with them, all of these things bring the children closer to you and develop important memories and bonding to hold you together during the turbulent teen years.

Another important time spent together is time making your child a success at certain activities. The key watershed activities which most preschool children need to pass in order to avoid embarrassment before their peers are potty training, learning to stop sucking their thumb, learning to ride a bike and throwing, catching and kicking a ball.

Your child will never forget that you patiently and lovingly made him a success in these areas. To be the first in Sunday School to go potty, to be praised for not sucking their thumb, to be the first on the block to ride a bike, to be one of the best on the school playground at soccer kickball or catch, these are skills which your child will look back on and associate his early success in life with your involvement. Set the precedent early. Develop this confidence early and you create an atmosphere of trust and teachability when it comes to the big issues.

A good way to spend time with your children is to include them on errands. Whenever my Dad would go on an errand he would walk through the house and pick up any of the loitering kids to go with him. We would have to “get dressed to go into town” and it was a real pain. But as I look back on it, these became special times with my father as we talked, ran errands and then stopped for a coke or treat. I have done this with my kids. It helps them get a feel for my life. You end up talking about things you probably would not have otherwise and you can always include a little fun time together. You can also use it to train your children that they are not allowed to have a sullen, bitter attitude because they have to spend time with their father. This is a real privilege for a child. I would not allow sullenness and I would not allow the foolishness of sullen children to cheat themselves out of spending time with their father.

## 12. THE FATHER IS INVOLVED

It is important to involve yourself in the life and circle of your children’s friends when they are young. The bad kids, the ones with little or no parental involvement are not interested in hanging out with a child whose father is actively involved in his life. It is important for a parent to remember 1 Cor 15:33 “*Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”* When it comes to knock around, hang-out with, goofing-off together friends, evil triumphs over good. You will want to make sure that the kids your child hangs with are good kids. A few ways you can make your presence known during the elementary and preschool years are: Volunteer to help with coaching; volunteer to be on the Sunday School or Children’s Committee at church; get involved in scouting or an activity your child enjoys; be a sponsor in social activities at school and church; and make your home open to group activities at home or school.

One of the reasons the kids like to come to our house to work on school projects is that we are nice to them. I will inevitably take up a tray of popcorn or snacks with cokes for them while they are working. The good kids think this is great and want to come back. The bad kids think it is corny and will ridicule your child. You don’t want your child hanging out with kids whose influence causes him to be embarrassed by acts of kindness from his parents. That is foolishness. It is a real privilege for a child to have a parent who is kind and thoughtful and these acts should be responded to in thankfulness and love. Unthankfulness in the Mahon home, or being embarrassed of a family member (be it parent or sibling) in the Mahon home, is the short road to discipline.

## 13. THE FATHER IS REAL AND OPEN

One of the biggest complaints which I would hear from college students and high school students in the ministry, was that their fathers just were not real people to them. Now I know that some of this was due to the vanity and self-centeredness of these students. You can be real all day in front of a self-absorbed egotist and he will not even remember you were there. On the other hand, in the subculture of fatherhood, self-revelation before children has not yet reached an art form. You might reflect, have your children ever seen you cry? When was the last time you came to your child and said, “I am sorry, I was



wrong?” When your child asks you a question, do you ever admit freely, “Sorry, I don’t know,” or do you have an answer and opinion on everything? When was the last time you went to your children and said, “Pray for me,” and then shared with them specific prayer requests? When was the last time you asked your child to help you with something they were good at, but you were not? All of these things are aspects of real relationships. As your children grow into adolescence, it will be important that you are real before them and thus allow them to be real before you.

As our children grew into adolescence El and I talked about the fact that for them to develop good social and coping skills they could not be wrong in every argument. After all, we are their parents, but we are not gods. We will sin. We will be wrong and there must be times, when after thoughtful discussion, we come to the conclusion that we are wrong, they are right and we change our mind and, if needed, apologize. Children must learn the difference between discussion and badgering, between presenting a case and winning a war, between expressing alternatives and manipulation. If a child is always wrong and knows they will always lose, how can they learn good communication and conflict resolution skills that will prepare them for marriage and the outside world?

#### 14. THE FATHER IS BENEVOLENT

One of the things I have always tried to do with the children is be kind. When we play games, I let them win a lot. When Sam and I play sports, I always make sure he wins the majority of the time. When we have discussions, I always let them win some. In most of these instances, where play is concerned, I try to make sure they win most of the time.

You don’t have to worry about your kids not losing. The world will make sure they lose. The world will make sure they develop hurts and disappointments and an “edge.” My job is always to love them and help them develop a winning edge and a strong relationship with me. When Sam and I played basketball, I would not drive the ball past him, knocking him out of the way and slamming it in; but rather, I would let him beat me. When we played catch, I would never play “burn ball” with him. When we played racquetball or tennis, I would not blow the ball past him or beat him every game. Now I am glad I didn’t because he is now big enough and gifted enough to get back at me but he doesn’t. He doesn’t because with sports, as with life, the real reason we were doing this was not so I could massage my ego but so we could be best buds. And that’s what we became and that’s what we are.

Now when we play sports together, the roles are reversed. He could beat me every time. He could dribble the ball past me and knock me out of the way. He could burn the ball into my mitt. He could stuff just about any sport down my throat, but he doesn’t. Sam and I are buds. We have never been in competition with each other. I am his greatest fan and he is my greatest ally. We love to spend time with each other because we love each other. The same thing was true with board games. The same thing was true with discussions. If they share with you a fact, don’t one up them. Instead, say, “Hey, that is really interesting...” and then draw them out. You don’t have to counter everything they know with proof you know more.

Think how you feel towards your business associates or neighbors who do that to you. Well, now you know how your son or daughter feels. If it is not a moral issue, if it is not a family issue, if it is just a discussion on a neutral subject, why not let them win? Why not say, “You know, I see your point. I think I will change my stand on that and agree with you.” Even though you know more about the subject being discussed than they do, ask questions, let them talk, and don’t correct them. Before correcting your child (or your

spouse for that matter) on some detail they are sharing, ask yourself, “Does it really matter?” and then just keep quiet.

## 15. THE FATHER IS THE SPIRITUAL LEADER IN THE HOME

There is one overriding principle at work here: talk is cheap. The one thing that will impact your children is what you *do*. Your children should grow up seeing you reading your Bible, praying, reviewing your verses and sharing Christ with others. They should see you repenting of sin and living at home the walk with God you profess away from home. Above all they should see you modeling God’s loving discipline without anger or vindictiveness.

In our house there is no TV after dinner.

This causes the Mahon home to be pretty quiet and relational in the evenings. Many nights will find me reading the Bible in the living room as I make myself available to the children to help with homework or other issues. All of the kids are voracious readers and all love to read the Bible. I really think that growing up with the memory of Dad, sitting in the living room night after night reading the Word of God, has had an impact on them.

I keep my verse pack with me and when traveling will work on my Scripture memory verses. Many times I will have the kids check my verses. Sometimes they will have me check theirs. Without ever saying anything, each child has developed a conviction of the centrality of

the Word of God. The businessmen I minister to all memorize verses. I never asked them to do so, but every time I meet with them I have them check my verses.

Becca and I were driving home from school and past a GI walking on the road. I never give rides to strangers and especially not with the kids in the car, but I knew that this was reserve weekend and recognized him to be college-age and no doubt attending the University in our community. I gave him a lift to the dorms and during the conversation had the chance to share my testimony. To tell you the truth I had almost forgotten Becca was in the car with us. When he got out Becca was very excited. She thought it was *so fantastic* the way I shared my faith.

She went on to enroll in Evangelism Explosion in our church, become an EE trainer, and then to be the youth representative in EE. Her first week at college, she became

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*Dave and Shirley are missionaries here in the US to International Students. They serve very sacrificially in Austin, Texas. I can remember Shirley sharing with me one of her most vivid memories—her parents on their knees, by the bed, praying for their children by name each night. Dave broke in and shared the same thing. At first, it seemed hokey to him, but then over the years he began to realize the zeal and earnestness that his parents were putting into his life. Many times during their youth, and into adulthood, this clear memory arrested them and caused them to make the right decisions.*

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*Dr. Wurtz was a prominent anesthesiologist in our community. He was active in his church, went on lengthy mission trips each year, donated his services to those in the ministry and gave sacrificially to mission ventures. He spoke at retreats and had an extensive command of the Word. The only problem was that his wife and children resented all this. Not just because of his schedule, which left the wife and children at home alone a large percentage of the time, but also because of his temper. He was a terror to live with. He could not keep office help or associates. His wife was brow beaten and showed it, and his kids were out of control and resentful, all too aware of the Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde experience they had at home vs. in public. In the lime light, he was all smiles and congeniality. At home, he was a terrible taskmaster. I remember the husband of one of his secretaries responding to my mentioning that Dr. Wurtz was heading out on another mission trip sharing with me, “The hardest thing I have to deal with in my Christian life is to rationalize the difference between Dr. Wurtz’s public Christian persona and how he treats those who work for him.” To my knowledge, none of his children are walking with God.*

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involved in Campus Crusade for Christ and continues to share her faith. For her first summer, she was involved in a summer-long evangelism project with CCC in Santo Cruz CA. Each week she would call home with new and exciting stories of sharing her faith on the boardwalk and beaches of this community. The next summer she spent in a closed Islamic country doing evangelism with the same organization. All this started with her watching her Dad share his testimony to a weekend warrior whom he picked up and gave a ride to.

## C. A SPECIAL SPIRITUAL WARNING TO FATHERS

Fathers must be careful not to confuse loving discipline with authoritarianism, anger, control or project orientation.

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

Eph 6:4

### 1. WATCH THE DESIRE TO RULE

Watch the desire to rule. Authoritarianism does not carry with it the desire to let go. Are you preparing your child to leave or to be cowed by your every wish? Are you training your child for success, or are you training him to be totally submissive before your authority?

*Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.*

Col 3:21

### 2. DO NOT EQUATE ANGER WITH DISCIPLINE

The desire to vent anger is not spiritual but fleshly, yet many fathers equate anger with discipline. If you find yourself disciplining in anger, not only do you have a personal problem, but you are damaging the picture of God the Father your son is developing. God does not discipline in anger, and his children do not fear His discipline or judgment.

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*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*

1 Jn 4:18

### 3. DO NOT USE DISCIPLINE TO MERELY CONTROL

Discipline by fathers is often a thinly-veiled attempt to control. Whether you are attempting to relive your life through your child, or are threatened by your child's growing adulthood, fathers and mothers must embrace the growth of their children, with freedom in mind. Remember: the object is not to train children to do what you want them to do. The object is to develop in your children the wisdom and life skills necessary to be fruitful and successful in life, to leave home and to function on their own. A means

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*Larry was an executive of a large Christian organization. His daughter, Betsy, was involved to a certain degree in our college ministry. I had often wondered about Betsy. She seemed withdrawn, defensive and would often stretch the truth or lie to justify her actions, even concerning the most inconsequential activities. Then, I met her father and understood why. Larry met me with a legal notepad with five pages outlining his plans for his daughter. He had her life mapped out, extending years beyond college graduation and he was concerned that this plan was not being followed. He wanted weekly reports on the activities of his child. He wanted control of her life. I remember him calling me one Saturday morning and asking me to give a report on his daughter. He was incensed that I would not meet with her weekly and then call him and give him a report on her actions without her knowing it. He called it love. He called it training. He called it discipline. But it was really just control.*

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to this may be to require them to do certain things, but this is not and must not become a control issue.

#### 4. MANY DADS LOVE A GOOD PROJECT

Your family knows when they are being loved and helped, and when they are being "worked with." It knows when it is being used and when it is being loved. Children must never be a project. Projects may help you to love your children, but *they* must not be the project.

*Gus was an effective evangelist, minister and college trainer. His wife once shared with me while at a conference a technique Gus would use when he was a military Chaplain. "He would have two men with him that he was ministering to at all times, whenever we went to a conference," she explained. "Then he would invite the kids along for an outing or hike. While he talked to one, he would send the other off with the kids. Then when they caught up, he would trade them off and send the other on ahead. This way he could cover the whole hiking trail with the kids and have a great time ministering." The only problem was that his kids were all too aware that this "outing with the kids" was just another ministry project. They grew up resentful, sullen and angry at their father, the ministry, and at God.*

Fathers should face the music about their family involvement. Children of Christian executives (full-time ministers), or of parents who are super-involved in church (essentially holding down jobs there), who do not give the time and support needed to their children, have children with the same character flaws as do their pagan counterparts. It was my observation, that if a father spends all his time at work, be it spiritual or secular, his children suffer the same consequences.

*Ken had stumbled on a great idea. For family vacations, he would accept speaking engagements. That way they stayed at a neat resort or conference grounds for free. He got to minister, and the wife and kids could do all the fun stuff. Ken always said that all he would do was preach and be available the rest of the time to spend with the family, but really there was always one project after another: a special meeting; a counseling session; or a chance to visit with a dignitary. His children knew these "vacations" were really ministry projects. They grew up resenting the church, the conference and the Lord. My daughter knew Ken's daughter. She related that this daughter hated family vacations and always had a bad taste in her mouth when she went to youth camp or retreats because they reminded her of how her Dad treated the family on these so-called "vacations."*

To the child, the results are the same, "Dad wasn't there when I needed him." A compulsive workaholic is the same anyway you cut it, and the results in the family are the same.

I noticed as a campus minister that the traits developed in children by nonresident dads were the same whether they were in full-time Christian service or executives of a corporation—whether they were Christians or pagans. I saw non-Christians kids with strong character traits who really took off for the Lord when they came to Christ. Invariably, they had loving fathers who were committed to the home. I saw resentful children of Christian fathers, looking for love and acceptance anyway they could find it, weak and resentful because their fathers were not there to help them grow and be successful. My observation is that the key is the presence of the father when it comes to character.

### III. Mothers And The Training Process

(Now dads may feel slighted that I spent more time on their deficiencies than on moms'. The fact is that Dad needs a little more work than Mom does. I hope the mothers will view this shorter section as a compliment. Having conceived, carried, nursed and bonded with their children at such an early age, mothers have a greater tendency towards the commitment to training than fathers).

*“For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

2 Tm 1:5; 3:14–15

## A. THE WORD OF GOD

In the Word of God children are instructed to listen to and learn from their mothers.

✠ *“My son... do not forsake your mother's teaching;”* Prv 1:8

✠ *“My son,... do not forsake the teaching of your mother;”* Prv 6:20

✠ *“Do not despise your mother when she is old.”* Prv 23:22

✠ *“The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him.”* Prv 31:1

In the Word of God, mothers are not second-class citizens. They hold a place of honor and respect. The value of a mother's and grandmother's instruction can be seen in Timothy, Paul's key disciple. In Acts 16:1–3, it was this man, Timothy, instructed in the faith by his mother and grandmother, that Paul chose as his key and right hand man (2 Tm 1:5; 3:14–15). The Scriptures abound with references to the key role played in the lives of godly men by their mothers. The role of the godly wife and mother is one established by God and He jealously guards her, so that she may carry out this role. In fact, in 1 Peter 3:7, the Word of God makes it clear that if wives/mothers are not treated well, as with a weaker vessel, as fellow heirs in the grace of life, the husband can expect his prayer life to be shut down by God. As a result, it is the responsibility of the father, as head of the home, to insure that the mother receives the respect and obedience of the children, for her sake, for his, for the sake of the family and in obedience to God.

This does not mean that the father does all the disciplining and the mother can fall back on, “You just wait till your father gets home!” It was always our practice that the one to whom the infraction was directed, that person carried out the discipline. The mother, though, does need the support and backing of the father in all conflicts. He has ultimate authority, but there must be no question on the part of the children that in all disputes *they are wrong and Mom is right*. In every situation, where sides must be taken, **the father must always and unequivocally side with Mom**. Now, having said this, I will admit, that once the issue is settled and we are alone, more than once El has shared with me that she thought I was wrong, or overreacted, and I have shared this with her on certain occasions as well. In that case, we call the child back and share our discussion, make changes or confessions as needed. But this is never carried out in front of the kids. We present a united front and we try always to support each other's authority before the children.

With this type of cooperation the family is able to work under a system where, as in Col 3:20, children are instructed to obey their “parents,” mother and father. And again in Eph 6:1, children are to obey both parents, Mom and Dad, for this is the right thing to do before God. If the father is undermining his wife's authority or does not exert his rule in such a way as to insure obedience to the mother on the part of the children, then he will

lead them into sin. The father then does himself, his wife and his children a great disservice.

Now we come to a unique and innovative concept. I don't know if this will be accepted or not. I don't know if the established religious circles will buy into it or not, but I think you should all give it a little consideration. Yes, yes, I know it is radical, I know it diverges from the cultural norm, I know it will hold you up to ridicule and derision, but just give it a little time to sink in. I don't know. It's new. It's innovative. It's crazy. But, it just may be the ticket...

## B. THE PHILOSOPHY

### 1. THE MOTHER TEACHES AND TRAINS THE CHILDREN

The mother, submissive to her husband, under his headship, leadership and by his authority, teaches and trains the children. What do you think? Will it fly? This presupposes some existing conditions, which are equally as radical:

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*Gretchen had very strong convictions about not working and let us know about it. When El went back to work, she could not help but show her disapproval. As a home schooler, it was bad enough that our kids were in public school, but then when El went back to work, for shame! The ironic thing was that she actually held the equivalent of three jobs and the behavior of her kids showed it. Her first was homeschooling her children. On top of this, she ran the Mother's Day Out program at our church, and she was in charge of the children's program on Sunday. She also gave piano lessons at the church, lead the women's prayer group and had college girls live with her for training and discipleship.*

### 2. THE MOTHER IS AT HOME

When we began having children Eleanor made a commitment to stay at home and she did just that for the next 17 years. She committed herself to raising the children and being there for them. When our youngest

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*Amid all her duties, her children could be seen running in the church unattended. They showed the same signs of neglect that any child shows whose mother is preoccupied with her own career and not her children. It does not matter whether the pursuits are spiritual, secular or personal, the results in the lives of the children are the same. Neglect is neglect. If it quacks like a duck, if it looks like a duck, if it walks like a duck, then it's a duck, irrespective of what you call it.*

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entered the third grade, El found herself at home all day and no longer "on call" by the kids. Not being called into the full-time ministry as some wives are, she began thinking about a career. She was still committed to the children, though, to be there for them in the afternoons and during their vacations. No career suited this need except teaching. She had several opportunities which would have been better for her financially, but her first commitment was to the family. God honored this by giving her a job where Megan and Liz were going to school. She went with them and came back with them. None of our children have ever come home from school to an empty house and none ever will.

Now there are cases when Mom simply cannot be at home and must work. In situations that involve the mother being widowed or divorced, she simply may have no other option but to work. In this situation 1 Cor 10:13 comes into play, which states, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." This is the grace clause in our daily life experience as Christian. It simply means that where difficulties increase, God will

supply special grace and, in the case of the single parent, God will indeed supply special grace.

Another situation which may occur is that the husband cannot find work or becomes disabled and the wife must work for a period until he is able to resume his role. In this case, the parent is still at home and the children's needs can be cared for. In still another case the husband's job may not supply enough for the family to survive on and in this case the grace principle of 1 Cor 10:13 is again applied.

I would like to stress though that I said, "may not supply enough to survive on." I do not feel that the Bible allows parents to abrogate the responsibility of raising their children just so they can raise their standard of living or acquire luxury items. If, without the wife working, shelter cannot be put over the family, clothes on the children, and meals on the table, or if they can it can only be done in a way that jeopardizes the health and safety of the children, that is one thing and a very important thing. Unfortunately, this is not the issue in most cases. Instead it is an issue of the size of the house, the type of car driven, and the luxury items in the home.

Would that every parent sees their child as the most precious luxury item imaginable—beyond compare to the trinkets for which they have traded time with their children! You can always, sometime in the future, buy the trinkets, but Mom, you can never have those early years with your children back.

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*An international student once confided to me that he was astonished to find in the homes that he visited that he was intrigued to find in many garages there was stored several hundred dollars worth of junk while sitting in the driveway was a car completely exposed to the elements, worth many thousands of dollars. I have noticed something similar in terms of values but far more tragic. A home sits empty all day, filled with expensive electronic equipment and furniture, in storage so to speak, while in a day care, exposed to the elements of the world, the flesh and the devil, far from the mother's care are the children. Children are of great worth, far surpassing the trinkets that sit in the empty home. Yet, Mom is at work to keep trinkets safe in an empty home, while her darlings are exposed to the harsh elements of life.*

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*Gene Warr, a business man in Oklahoma, calls them the "Golden Handcuffs". A woman returns to work, the family commits itself to a lifestyle dependent on her work, and then she cannot respond when the family needs her. To avoid this, he wisely counseled, when your wife returns to work, do not spend one penny of her earnings on your lifestyle, save for college, pay off the house, prepare for retirement, but do not change your lifestyle one bit. Then she can quit whenever she wants to or needs to.*

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### 3. THE MOTHER IS VISIBLY SUBMISSIVE TO HER HUSBAND

It is always interesting to see a mother who models 101 ways to wiggle out from under her husband's authority trying to exercise that same authority over her children. Having modeled a disdain for the rule of authority on the basis of respect and of the Word of God, she is consistently bewildered as to why her own children aren't willing to respect her and submit to the rule of the Word of God.

Be it the tongue, manipulation, respect or obedience, wives can expect to reap what they sow in this area. In the child's eyes, in this area, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Authority and the roots of spousal submission are rooted in the same ground as those of childhood submission.

Rather than sabotaging her own prospects, the wise wife will model submission before her children. She will teach them by her actions how to do this. Then, with the aid of her

husband, she will expect the same response from them as she willingly gives to her husband.

#### 4. THE MOTHER HAS MADE HOME, FAMILY AND CHILDREN A PRIORITY

Children are not dummies. They know when they are second or third place to the mother's real desires. For some women it is “finding themselves,” for others it is “needing their own space,” for still others it is “a need for a creative outlet,” and for others it is either a real career away from the home or a career based on denial, either in the church or some para-church organization. Whatever the case, nothing is more devastating to a child than the subtle realization that Mom is often somewhere else, even when she is home.

#### 5. THE MOTHER VISIBLY SERVES IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE CHURCH

Having said this, I will need to balance this with the importance of modeling some form of service while maintaining your priorities. For the young mother, it may be as little as volunteering in the nursery once each quarter. As your children advance in age, the opportunities to volunteer in their school and church activities increase. By turning down opportunities to pursue a career, the mother leaves herself free to be actively involved in her child's success at school and at church.

#### 6. THE MOTHER IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THEIR LIVES

This assumes that the mother is not using extracurricular church activities, community or personal pursuits as spiritual day care, but rather the mother is involved in the lives of her children. The days when Mom can expect school, church, and society in general to reinforce Christian values are gone. It is essential for Mom to be there for the kids, to know what is going on in their lives, and be an integral part of discipling and training them for success. It is here that Mom must overcome the tendency to rationalize away misbehavior on the part of the children as cute, or as part of their temperament. It is imperative that Mom be able to look objectively on the behavior of the children, and to help them make the changes needed to be both fruitful and successful in life.

#### 7. THE MOTHER MODELS DEPENDENCY ON GOD

Children have a special bonding relationship with their mother, especially in the preschool years. They spend more time with their mother than with any other person in their lives. In fact, in terms of one-on-one time together, *the child will spend more time with the mother than anyone else in his entire life*. During this time, a child is influenced spiritually by his mother's behavior. To be with a mother during these first five or six years before schooling begins and to see her praying, singing hymns, spending time in the Word and serving the Lord, leave an indelible imprint on the child's soul as he observes the behavior of this Mom he has come to love so much. Unfortunately, in the recent years, with moms entering the work force almost immediately after birth, these children instead spend this time with distracted nannies and in impersonal childcare facilities. Nothing can express the lost spiritual opportunities for modeling and training that take place when a decision like this is made. A mother who is dependent upon God—not just in emergencies, but in everyday living—is a gift beyond compare to the spiritual development of a child. Equally great is the loss to the child if the mother chooses to return to her personal pursuits rather than sacrificially give herself to her child.



## 8. THE MOTHER IS AFFECTIONATE WITH HER CHILDREN

This is usually a given, but there are some mothers who, as a result of their upbringing have come to the conclusion that too much affection is bad for a child. Nothing could be further from the truth. You cannot give a baby too much love and as the child grows, your understanding of love will grow as well. A child who grows up knowing his mother loves him and with clear memories of love and affection will make a better spouse and better Christian as he will be able to better express his emotions. The Word of God, in 1 Thes 2:7, compares the love of a mother for her child with the type of love Christians are supposed to have for their spiritual children when it states, *“But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.”*

As the child grows and learns that discipline, too, is a form of love, his relationship with God and parents will be enhanced. Many a mother has foolishly thought that by overlooking a child’s misbehavior, she is expressing grace and love to the child. Nothing could be further from the truth. In Hebrews 12, we see that it is out of love that God disciplines us, that this is an act of grace on His part. In Romans 1, we see that when God has given a people over to judgment, when He has given them up to their sins, that He no longer disciplines them but rather lets them have their way. That this is the most severe form of judgement known to God. Physical affection, hugging, kissing, caressing, praise and encouragement, being there to listen, to play, and to wipe the tears from their little eyes, and yes, to discipline and train them for success, all these are acts of affection on the part of the mother to the child.

## 9. THE MOTHER CONCERNS HERSELF WITH HER PERSONAL APPEARANCE, COUNTENANCE AND THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE HOME

Proverbs 31 speaks of the godly wife and mother. In this passage, there are several statements pertaining to the appearance and atmosphere of the wife, mother and home. This responsibility is laid at the mother's feet by God.

### **She is hard at work assuring that her home and family are will cared for.**

- ✠ Prv 31:13 *She looks for wool and flax, And works with her hands in delight.*
- ✠ Prv 31:15 *She rises also while it is still night, And gives food to her household, And portions to her maidens.*
- ✠ Prv 31:18 *She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night.*
- ✠ Prv 31:21 *She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet.*
- ✠ Prv 31:27 *She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness.*

### **She is hard at work assuring her personal appearance is a testimony**

- ✠ Prv 31:17 *She girds herself with strength, And makes her arms strong.*
- ✠ Prv 31:22 *She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple.*
- ✠ Prv 31:25 *Strength and dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future.*

### **She works hard at her personal life and her walk with God**

- ✠ Prv 31:15 *She rises also while it is still night, And gives food to her household, And portions to her maidens.*

- ✠ Prv 31:11 *The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain.*
- ✠ Prv 31:18 *She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night.*
- ✠ Prv 31:26 *She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*
- ✠ Prv 31:30 *Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.*

## 10. THE MOTHER WORKS AT CREATING A REFUGE FOR HER FAMILY

A family whose mother has committed herself to creating a refuge from the harsh realities of the world is blessed indeed. As children face the temptations and pressures of modern secular society, the knowledge that there is a home, a spiritual refuge that they can go to is of value beyond compare. It is often times the thought of the exchange of this precious commodity for the sin that presently tempts them that causes the teenager or young adult to make the right choice. Children waking up to find Mom caring for their needs, children coming home from school to find Mom there for them, children spending their vacations from school with their loving, caring mother—nothing can replace or be a substitute for this kind of refuge and relationship in the life of your children.

## C. SPECIAL SCRIPTURAL WARNING FOR MOTHERS

In the family life of Isaac, the great patriarch of the Scriptures and the home from which emerged the child Jacob, from which would spring the nation of Israel, and the child, Esau, who would be father to the Arab nations, we can see tragic mistakes on the part of the mother. Three crucial mistakes were made on the part of Rachel, the wife of Isaac.

### 1. FIRST, PLAYING FAVORITES

Nothing can be more tragic in a family than when a mother plays favorites with her children. Nothing brings more animosity between the children or cause more hurt and bitterness than this. In the case of Jacob and Esau, it created a lifelong animosity that separated a mother from her children and robbed her of her peace in her old age.

### 2. SECOND, BEING TOO SOFT ON THE CHILDREN

Many a mother feels it is an expression of love to overlook a child's misbehavior. Nothing could be further from the truth. The failure to discipline children simply assures that the foolishness which is bound up in their hearts will stay there. A wise mother, realizes that loving discipline is the best way to assure her child's success. Not only this, but it assures that their relationship with each other will be one of love and happiness, free from conflict. In Prv 10:1 the Word of God states, "*A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.*"

### 3. THIRD, UNDERMINING THE HUSBAND'S AUTHORITY

Rachel thought that by undermining Isaac's authority she would assure her happiness and the well-being of her family. Instead, the opposite happened. Nothing can be gained and only tragedy can result from this route. The last thing the mother wants to teach her children is how to be deceitful, but this is the lesson they learn from a mother who seeks to undermine and circumvent the spiritual authority of her husband. The Word of God says in Prv 19:13 that "*A foolish son is destruction to his father, And the contentions of a*

*wife are a constant dripping.*” Unfortunately, the two—the contentious wife and the foolish son—go hand in hand.

## **IV. You Cannot Expect The Children To Be What You Are Not**

When all is said and done with regard to the responsibilities of the husband and wife, the ultimate conclusion is that what you do speaks as loud as what you say. You cannot expect your children to be what you are not, and you cannot expect your children to be what you are without concerted effort on your part. There is nothing more futile than a married couple whose relationship is characterized by strife, animosity and bitterness trying to raise healthy, wise, successful children. Why should a child whose parents are a failure in their own relationship, listen to counsel concerning their life decisions? Let me exhort parents to work hard—very hard, on their marriage so that they can have a platform from which to speak to their children. You can fool the church, you can fool your family, you can fool your friends, but you can’t fool your children. In my experience, the hypocrisy of parents in their marriage and in their dealings with their children has done more damage in terms of children’s ability to lead spiritually fruitful and fulfilled lives outside the home, than the secular education, news media, and entertainment industry combined. In addition, all the church programs, youth programs, AWANAS, camps, retreats and speakers the church can muster, cannot undo the damage of Christians parents at odds with one another and living a double life before their children.

## V. Summary

### I. The Word Of God Places The Father Uniquely As The Head Of The Family

- A. He is the head of the wife. Eph 5:22–24
- B. The Word of God makes it clear though that honor and obedience is due to both parents by the children. As far as the children go in the area of obedience and honor, there is no “pecking order”. Eph 6:1

### III. Fathers And The Training Process

- A. The Word of God and the father
- B. The success of all that we have studied thus far is dependent upon a radical and innovative philosophy:
  - 1. The father is at home.
  - 2. The father knows his children.
  - 3. The father is known by his children.
  - 4. The father is visibly submissive before the children to authority.
  - 5. The father has earned the respect of the children through his relationship with his wife.
  - 6. The father is consistently open and affectionate with his children.
  - 7. Contrastingly, there is no place for derogatory nicknames in the Christian family.
  - 8. Coaching, training and criticizing your child in front of their brothers and sisters or friends is also out.
  - 9. The father is not one of the guys.
  - 10. Physical affection is equally as important and cannot be stressed enough.
  - 11. The father spends free time with the children.
  - 12. The father is involved in their life and circle of friends.
  - 13. The father is real and open.
  - 14. The father is benevolent.
  - 15. The father is the spiritual leader in the home.
- C. It is the Father’s position of headship that this passage in Ephesians emphasizes.
  - 1. The desire to rule, authoritarianism, does not carry with it the desire to let go.
  - 2. The desire to vent anger is not spiritual, but fleshly, yet many fathers equate anger with discipline.
- D. Discipline by fathers is often a thinly-veiled attempt to control.
- E. Many dads love a good project.

### III. Mothers And The Training Process

- A. In the Word of God, children are instructed to listen to and learn from their mothers.

**B. Now we come to a unique and innovative concept**

1. The mother is at home
2. The mother is visibly submissive before the children to her husband.
3. The mother has made home, family and children a priority.
4. The mother is seen by her children serving in the community and the church.
5. The mother is actively involved in their lives.
6. The mother models dependency on God.
7. The mother is affectionate with her children.
8. The mother concerns herself with her personal appearance, countenance and the atmosphere of the home.
9. She is hard at work assuring that her home and family are well cared for.
10. She is hard at work assuring that her personal appearance is a testimony.
11. She works hard at her personal life and her walk with God.
12. The mother works at creating a refuge for her family.

**C. Special Scriptural Warning For Mothers**

1. First, playing favorites.
2. Second, being too soft on the children.
3. Third, undermining the husband's authority.

**IV. You Cannot Expect The Children To Be What You Are Not**

When all is said and done, with regard to the responsibilities of the husband and wife, the ultimate conclusion is that what you do speaks as loud as what you say. You cannot expect your children to be what you are not, and you cannot expect your children to be what you are without concerted effort on your part.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Post-Study Projects

**Author's  
Note:**

The following projects are a continuation of the process begun in Chapter Six as you set and implement changes in your child's behavior. What follows are a number of projects which you and your wife can complete. Some are to be done separately and the results compared. Others are to be done together. The goal is to come to an agreement upon the discipline needs of your child and then work on them together as a team. Remember, the general rule in decision making in this area is to yield to the more conservative of the couple in arriving at a decision.

#### **Scripture Memory Verse—Eph 6:1–3**

**Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.**

**Last Weeks Verse—Prv 1:8** *“Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake your mother's teaching;”*

## QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: FATHERS AND MOTHERS

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: PRV 6:20

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?**

**Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: EPH 5:22– 24

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?**

**Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: EPH 6: 1–3

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?**

**Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

## QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: FATHERS AND MOTHERS

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: EPH 6:4

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?**

**Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: HEB 12:5– 11

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?**

**Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: 1 Tm 1:5; 3:14,15

**How does this passage relate to the theme?**

**When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me?**

**Explain why:**

**How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?**



## Parental Roles

*In completing the following two projects, the father and the mother should fill out their sheets separately and then come to an agreed-upon evaluation using the sheet done jointly. Use a scale of 0—the pits, to 10—wonder Dad.*

### **The Father** (filled out by father and then shared with wife)

1. Is at home
2. Knows his children (personalities, gifts, quirks, etc.)
3. Is known by his children (shares prayer requests, cries openly, is real).
4. Confesses sin, says “I’m sorry,” and asks children for forgiveness.
5. Is visibly submissive before children to authorities.
  - a. Church
  - b. Work
  - c. Government
  - d. Laws
6. Is consistently open and affectionate with the children.
  - a. Praises
  - b. Says “I love you”
  - c. Hugs
  - d. Kisses
7. Spends free time with children.
  - a. Regular dates
  - b. Reads
  - c. Plays
  - d. Includes them in on his work, hobbies, sports etc.
8. Is involved in their life and circle of friends.
9. Is real and open.
10. Is their spiritual leader and teacher.

## Parental Roles

*In completing the following two projects, the father and the mother should fill out their sheets separately and then come to an agreed-upon evaluation using the sheet done jointly. Use a scale of 0—the pits to 10—wonder Dad.*

### **The Father** (filled out by mother and then shared with father)

1. Is at home
2. Knows his children (personalities, gifts, quirks, etc.)
3. Is known by his children (shares prayer requests, cries openly, is real).
4. Confesses sin, says “I’m sorry,” and asks children for forgiveness.
5. Is visibly submissive before children to authorities.
  - a. Church
  - b. Work
  - c. Government
  - d. Laws
6. Is consistently open and affectionate with the children.
  - a. Praises
  - b. Says “I love you”
  - c. Hugs
  - d. Kisses
7. Spends free time with children.
  - a. Regular dates
  - b. Reads
  - c. Plays
  - d. Includes them in on his work, hobbies sports etc.
8. Is involved in their life and circle of friends.
9. Is real and open.
10. Is their spiritual leader and teacher.

## Parental Roles

*In completing the following two projects, the father and the mother should fill out their sheets separately and then come to an agreed-upon evaluation using the sheet done jointly. Use a scale of 0—the pits to 10—wonder Dad.*

### The Father (filled out together after discussing the results of each)

1. Is at home
2. Knows his children (personalities, gifts, quirks, etc.)
3. Is known by his children (shares prayer requests, cries openly, is real).
4. Confesses sin, says “I’m sorry,” and asks children for forgiveness.
5. Is visibly submissive before children to authorities.
  - a. Church
  - b. Work
  - c. Government
  - d. Laws
6. Is consistently open and affectionate with the children.
  - a. Praises
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8. Is involved in their life and circle of friends.
9. Is real and open.
10. Is their spiritual leader and teacher.

## Parental Roles

*In completing the following two projects, the father and the mother should fill out their sheets separately and then come to an agreed-upon evaluation using the sheet done jointly. Use a scale of 0—the pits to 10—wonder Mom.*

### **The Mother** (filled out by father and then shared with wife)

1. Is at home
2. Is visibly submissive before her children to her husband.
3. Has earned the respect of her children through her love and devotion to her husband.
4. Has made home, family and children a priority.
5. Is actively involved in her children's lives.
  - a. Available for help at school.
  - b. Available for help at Sunday school.
  - c. Is seen at her child's clubs, hobbies or sporting events.
6. Is seen by the children as active in her church.
7. Models dependence upon God to the children.
8. Is affectionate with her children.
  - a. Praises
  - b. Says "I love you"
  - c. Hugs
  - d. Kisses
9. Concerns herself with her appearance and her countenance.
10. Works at creating a refuge, a family, a place to come home to.
  - a. The house is clean.
  - b. The children are under control.
  - c. She keeps to her budget.

## Parental Roles

*In completing the following two projects, the father and the mother should fill out their sheets separately and then come to an agreed-upon evaluation using the sheet done jointly. Use a scale of 0—the pits to 10—wonder Mom.*

### **The Mother** (filled out by mother and then shared with father)

1. Is at home
2. Is visibly submissive before her children to her husband.
3. Has earned the respect of her children through her love and devotion to her husband.
4. Has made home, family and children a priority.
5. Is actively involved in her children's lives.
  - a. Available for help at school.
  - b. Available for help at Sunday school.
  - c. Is seen at her child's clubs, hobbies or sporting events.
6. Is seen by the children as active in her church.
7. Models dependence upon God to the children.
8. Is affectionate with her children.
  - a. Praises
  - b. Says "I love you"
  - c. Hugs
  - d. Kisses
9. Concerns herself with her appearance and her countenance.
10. Works at creating a refuge, a family, a place to come home to.
  - a. The house is clean.
  - b. The children are under control.
  - c. She keeps to her budget.

## Parental Roles

*In completing the following two projects, the father and the mother should fill out their sheets separately and then come to an agreed-upon evaluation using the sheet done jointly. Use a scale of 0—the pits to 10—wonder Mom.*

### **The Mother** (filled out together by father and mother)

1. Is at home
2. Is visibly submissive before her children to her husband.
3. Has earned the respect of her children through her love and devotion to her husband.
4. Has made home, family and children a priority.
5. Is actively involved in her children's lives.
  - a. Available for help at school.
  - b. Available for help at Sunday school.
  - c. Is seen at her child's clubs, hobbies or sporting events.
6. Is seen by the children as active in her church.
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  - a. Praises
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9. Concerns herself with her appearance and her countenance.
10. Works at creating a refuge, a family, a place to come home to.
  - a. The house is clean.
  - b. The children are under control.
  - c. She keeps to her budget.

## The Mother's Place Of Honor

***How do you show to your children that the mother holds a position of honor in the home? In the space below, working together, list the routines or traditions your family keeps to communicate this to the children.***

***Now make a list of routines or traditions which you can add to your family to assure her honor.***

## Mothers And Fathers In The Home

*Refer back to the study as needed and reflect together on ways that you as a couple can center the life of the family more around the home. What adjustments need to be made in your lives, in the lives of your children, and in the priorities of the family?*

*Our Lives:*

*The Lives Of Our Children:*

*The Priorities Of The Family:*



## *Applications*

**I. First, what are we doing right and want to continue to emphasize?**

**II. Second—what needs to be added, changed, dropped or adjusted and what is our plan for accomplishing this?**