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“The Family on the Altar of Christian Service”
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The
Family
on the altar
 of Christian Service

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*But if anyone does not
 provide for his own, and
 especially for those of his
 household, he has denied
 the faith, and is worse
 than an unbeliever.*
1 Timothy 5:8

I THOUGHT IT WOULD
 BE THE SADDEST,
 MOST EMBARRASSING
 MOMENT FOR A
 FELLOW MINISTER THAT I
 WOULD EVER HAVE TO SIT
 THROUGH. At the national
 convention of the
 denomination in which I
 was ministering at the
 time, the key note speaker
 had admonished the
 pastors to take care of
 their own homes if they
 expected to take care of the
 church, and that the

failure to do so was one of
 the sins which disqualifies
 us from the ministry.

Now the senior pastor in
 the church within which I
 was serving was preaching
 a message of defense. His
 own family in tatters, his
 own marriage strained, his
 own children estranged
 from him and the Lord, he
 was preaching the counter
 sermon on how God had
 called him to put his
 family on the altar. I
 squirmed in my seat as I
 listened with
 embarrassment for this
 man, thinking this would
 be the trough in terms of
 this experience. This
 however was not to be the
 case.

Just a few years later, I
 was even more
 embarrassed for a
 missionary as he spoke at
 a leadership workshop.
 His own marriage
 strained, his own daughter
 asking to be *raised* in
 another's home, his own

son in rebellion. He shared how he had to put his family on the altar. He had made his family and his children into idols, and God had asked him to put these idols on the altar and sacrifice them to the greater cause of the ministry. Now I thought it could never get worse. This pernicious doctrine of convenience could surely go no lower.

Yet it was just a *short* time later that I found myself a guest at a national staff leadership meeting. Here ministry leaders from around the US had

gathered to pray, to plan, and to learn from one another. At an intimate gathering on the last day the national director preached to these young men that they should put family on the altar for the greater good of the ministry. In doing so, he failed to explain to them the hatred towards him expressed by his own child, the lies woven to ruin him. Though exonerated by time in regards to the lies, what hurts and stains remained upon this family and upon this minister who put his family on the altar?

fulfill their responsibilities before God to wife, children and household affairs, undoing where necessary any wrong teaching they have received through word or deed.

In my nearly 30 years in the ministry I have been involved in Youth ministry, Student ministry, Adult Education ministry and the pastorate as well as travel extensively on the mission field. It is my candid observation that the children of non-resident, distracted fathers share the same character flaws be the fathers executives with IBM, Exxon, a doctor, a member of a large legal or accounting firm — or a Christian leader, pastor or missionary. Whatever the career, be it spiritual or secular, if the father does not come home at night, or if while at home, the father is distracted by his obsession with his career, then his children suffer the same character flaws, irrespective of his calling.

- ⌋ “keeping his children under control with all dignity”
- ⌋ “having children who believe,”
- ⌋ “good managers of their children”
- ⌋ To come home at night, share in a sit-down evening meal with your family and afterwards engage in the lives of your wife, your children and your household affairs, ministering, encouraging and blessing them with the same focus as the business of the ministry during the day.
- ⌋ To restrict our travel and not abandon your wife, your children nor your household affairs to others, either through neglect or through delegation..
- ⌋ To fulfill your responsibilities to your wife, your children and your household affairs in terms of the material care and upkeep of the family and the possessions to which God has entrusted you.
- ⌋ To decide now if the capacity to obey God in the area of the family while fulfilling the expectations of the organization, church or mission board under which you serve exists. If you cannot, you must remove yourself to a ministry where you can obey God and fulfill your responsibilities to your family.
- ⌋ To encourage, teach, exhort and yes, model, to those in your spiritual care and help them to

If there is any one thing I have learned through my 30 years in the ministry it is this: the altar is made for sacrifice, for burning things to ashes. And if you put your family on the altar and you sacrifice them, you burn them and in the end all you have are the ashes of sin, of grief and of regret. Yet having said this, I freely acknowledge that there are men — and not just a few — whose ministry success seems to validate the decision to put the family on the altar. True, their marriages are not what they should be. True, their children are not walking with God, or active in the church, but equally true is the apparent blessing of God on their lives and ministry. You can't argue with results, or can you?

I call this the Samson principle. In Samson, we find a man of terrible character and personal family values being used

by God and performing great works of God. We praise God for working through Samson, but we submit his lifestyle to the Word of God for scrutiny before emulating it.

It is true that a rebellious adult child does not indicate the violations of scriptural injunctions of the family. No Christian should be judged on the basis of the decisions his or her child make as adults. It is also true that a successful ministry as defined by man's standards does not free us from obedience to any passage of Scripture.

I always respond with pity towards adults who, as children, chose to rebel against their scriptural upbringing. What opportunities and joys were lost by this fateful decision? I must confess, though, that my righteous indignation is reserved for those successful ministers

who choose to neglect their responsibility toward their children and family for the glory of the ministry. What chance did these kids have? Of all children, theirs should have had the brightest future and yet now they are angry and resentful at both God and man. They of all people have reason

with the masses in attendance. Missing the man's three boys, he later returned to the gravesite, where they were urinating on his grave, thinking no one was around. They recounted in tears the neglect, the anger, the abuse and the fear that terrorized their home and family while this great

I have observed the Samson principle at work over and over again in my years in the ministry: one of the most successful missionaries rises to the level of country leader, while at the same time being a homosexual; a successful pastor and evangelist who is simultaneously involved in adulterous relationships; a successful missionary, who slips away once each week to spend a day in prayer but is actually carrying on an adulterous affair. These and more have taught me that "success" in the ministry does not validate lifestyle. *The Word of God* alone validates a lifestyle.

for resentment, if indeed any do.

An elderly missionary friend of mine recounts an experience he had. One of the great Bible teachers and ministers of his generation had died. There was a beautiful funeral

man was alive. They felt nothing but relief. A successful ministry does not justify a lifestyle. It does not nullify doctrines of the Holy Spirit, and it does not justify principles of family discipleship. Only the Word of God

"ministry credits" for our family that we do for the rest of the ministry.

- ⌞ To offer up ourselves on the altar rather than our wife, family and household *responsibilities* and in so doing, to place ambition on the altar so as to fulfill our responsibilities to our wife, our children and our homes.
- ⌞ To place false guilt and a need driven priority system on the altar, which has caused us to place our *incessant* desire to be busy in the ministry or in our personal pursuits above the commands of God, thus trusting in Christ we go home and fulfill our responsibilities to our wife, our children and our households.
- ⌞ To confess to God, our wife and our children where necessary, our sin in this area and as a result of this begin giving yourself "ministry credit" for your time with your family.

- ⌞ To sit down with your wife and come up with a plan for fulfilling the commands of God concerning our qualifications as a minister in accordance with the Word of God in I Timothy and Titus. In doing this, go through the list from these passages as they pertain to the family. Discuss each one with your wife and make a corresponding list of changes that need to take place in order to return your lifestyle and ministry priorities to one which qualifies you in the sight of God and in the harsh light of Scripture to be functioning in your role as Christian leader, pastor or missionary.
- ⌞ "must provide for his own, and especially for those of his household"
- ⌞ "the husband of one wife" (3Xs)
- ⌞ "he must be one who manages his own household well" (3X's)

ministry to have any regard for your (wife, children, home, household affairs...) when it comes to the expansion of the ministry.

If this man has sacrificed his own wife, children, or family for the ministry, he will have no compunctions at all about sacrificing your wife, your children, or your health. If this man has sacrificed his own wife, or children or family for the ministry he will have not hesitate exhorting you to do the same.

The Christian leader, minister or missionary needs to understand that the responsibility for the application of the passages in I Timothy and Titus rests sole upon his shoulders. The fact that your board or church or ministry will allow you to put your family on the altar does not free you from the consequences of

your actions, either before man or before God. When a minister by his actions burns his family up (or out) on the altar, the exoneration of those to whom he is responsible in a temporal sense, does not exonerate him in the eyes of God. The sacrificial minister always seems to come out unscathed when the family goes on the altar. But then when you think about it, after all, he put them on the altar rather than crawling up on it himself.

WHAT WILL WE DECIDE?

⌋ To give the passages on family in I Timothy 3, 5 and Titus 1 the same attention and emphasis that we do the other qualifications *listed* in these passages and in doing so to give ourselves the same

does, and It is our only authority.

In the same vein, I have known men who gave themselves to their jobs or ministries, neglecting both wife and children. The wife remained faithful and the children, though out of control in their early years, turned to God later in life. These men justify their actions by the fact that they have loving wives and children who love God and are active in the faith. These men, however, are not exonerated from the sin of neglect to their families and negligence in obedience to the Word of God. They will give an account to God on the basis of their conformity to the Word of God as fathers and husbands. They will not be judged on the basis their wife's conformity, or on their children's conformity to the Word of God — despite their neglect. They will give an account to God for their

own actions.

You do not put obedience on the altar for God. This may seem absurd but it is a frequently taught doctrine at pastor and staff conferences. Time and time again we, as ministers, are exhorted to put family on the altar, which means we are to put obedience to God on the altar along with our wife and our children.

TO BRING THIS POINT HOME, I often take pastors and staff to 1 Ti 3:1–7, in which the Biblical standards of leadership are laid out in the Bible. I then present the staff with the following scenarios:

A pastor says to you, “I know verse 2 states that a pastor should be the *'husband of one wife'* but there are so many needy women in my church, I just had to put this on the altar for God.” What would

you say?

“I know verse 3 says that a pastor should not be *'addicted to wine'* but there are just so many pressures in the ministry I had to put this on the altar for God.” What would you say?

“I know verse 3 says a pastor should be *'free from the love of money'* but there are just so many opportunities for the use of money in the ministry that I had to put this on the altar for God?” What would you say?

“I know verse 4 and 5 says, *'He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping*

his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)' but there are just so many needs. God's call was so compelling. The ministry to which I was called requires such sacrifice, that I had to put this on the altar for God.” What would you say?

In God's eyes none of these decisions is acceptable. You do not put obedience on the altar. You put self on the altar for the sake of obedience, not vice versa. You do not sacrifice others, you sacrifice yourself. “John, there are

Perhaps it would be a worthwhile thing to put your family on the altar in exchange for having a world wide multi-million dollar ministry where literally hundreds of thousands are being touched — a ministry which bears your name and in which you will be lovingly looked to until death? Look at that for which you are willing to offer your family on the altar. You are willing to offer up on the Altar of False Sacrifice the most precious gift and responsibility given to you by God for a ministry which (in the not too distant future) you will leave of your own volition, you will retire, or you will be asked to resign.

characteristics in mind as we make our decision, He is telling us of His decision concerning the acceptability of the candidate. We cannot be arbitrary in the hierarchy of the selection process in the placing of these qualifications on the altar. In giving us this list, the Holy Spirit gives no particular emphasis to the qualifications, but rather lists them all together, each being of equal value and worth.

It is possible to maintain a spiritual position by men which is not recognized by God. It is possible to hold a ministry position from man while at the same time to have lost that same ministry in the sight of God, because of wrongly offering marriage, children or family up on the altar.

It is possible to maintain a spiritual position by men which is not recognized by

God. Many Christian organizations, churches and mission boards allow this to take place. The church or board may go ahead and leave a man in his position, the numbers may continue to roll in, the budget may grow, the tasks may be faithfully accomplished, and everything may seem to be normal, but God has lifted His hand. When we evaluate the work of God we do not do so by sight, but by faith. We do so on the basis of the Holy Word of God. And where God has disqualified a man, no matter what the organization says, the man is disqualified.

The willingness of others to encourage you to sacrifice your family does not free you from the commands of God. Do not expect a supervisor or pastor who sacrificed (wife, children, home, household affairs...) for the

having an answer to those cries and having been entrusted with wife, children and household, this same Christian leader, pastor or missionary is to obey in fulfillment of his

“We didn’t know missionaries had family lives. None of the missionaries we knew did.” —Group of international students we were hosting in our home.

responsibilities. He is not free at this late hour to seek to return to God that for which he so desperately yearned.

Remember, these qualifications are set by God, not man. The qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:1 – 13; 5:8; Titus 1:1 – 9 are not negotiable and are not to be placed on the altar.

These are summed as the following: “An overseer must...

- Provide for his own,

and especially for those of his household

- Be the husband of one wife (a command so important that it is given three times)
- Be one who manages his own household well, (also commanded three times)
- Keep his children under control with all dignity
- Have children who believe,
- Be good managers of their children.”

Man does not have the authority to excuse disobedience. The qualifications in I Timothy and Titus are not given for our consideration and reference as we choose the candidate best suited for the job. Instead, they are God’s standards which He is imposing upon the church. God is not asking us to keep these

great needs on the mission field, so I am going to sell your car and give the money to foreign missions!” I don’t think so! “Honey, there are so many needs in the ministry. I am going to have you and the kids make the sacrifice for my ministry.” Certainly not!

You, *as the minister*, sacrifice. You sacrifice

The time for consideration of putting wife, children and household responsibilities on the altar is when you are single.

your ego. You sacrifice the praise. You sacrifice the organizational standing. You place *yourself* on the altar and obey God. If, in the context of obeying God, you can have the ministry size, the organizational standing, the praise, that is well and good. It is from God. If not, you die to this and *place yourself* on the altar

and fulfill your responsibility to God in the area of the family. You *obey* God, you put yourself on the altar. You do not put obedience to God on the altar.

Pastor, staff person, executive of Christian organization, missionary, you could have chosen to remain celibate. The time for consideration of putting wife, children and household responsibilities on the altar is when you are or were single. You could have delayed the decision, you could have chosen celibacy. You could have embraced 1 Corinthians 7:32 “But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord;” This was the time to be thinking of putting the family on the altar, when it was you who would be making the sacrifice, not your

children, and not your wife. You could have chosen to give yourself totally to the ministry — unencumbered by wife and

When things are put on the altar they burn up and turn to ashes. Think about this the next time you contemplate putting your family on the altar. Is your family something God is asking you to burn up, to turn to ashes, to blow away in the wind?

children — but you chose not to do *that*. If you had, your wife no doubt would have married some fine Christian gentleman who considered both her and the children a blessing and would have been committed to fulfilling the Biblical injunctions to the family in obedience to God. But you asked her to marry you. You gave her children to bear. Now, God looks to you to fulfill your responsibility for these

decisions that you made. You prayed, you called to God, you sought Him for a wife and then for children. Now that God has answered, you do not go to God and say, “Here, you can have them back, I put them on the altar.” No, the family is now an area of obedience that God requires of you. You do not put obedience on the altar.

We will now turn ourselves to a more in-depth study of this topic of “putting the family on the altar.”

YOU DO NOT PUT OBEDIENCE ON THE ALTAR. In the Old

Covenant, man was not free to sacrifice anything he wanted.

In pagan societies, altar worship is very subjective and self-serving. You put whatever you want on the altar. The person making the sacrifice brings the sacrifice. It seems to make sense. Who better knows

still the case today under the New Covenant. Without the guidance and oversight of God and His revealed Word, man due to his sin nature, naturally degenerates into sacrificing that which is not really a sacrifice at all. In his pride he offers up his family, his wife, his children, and the mundane responsibilities of his house and home... things which he does not find exciting or rewarding — things which he does not really want to do.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN from NEW

COVENANT QUALIFICATIONS of leadership and putting the family on the altar?

Christ’s sacrifice is sufficient. Because of Christ’s finished work, fulfilling the literal sacrificial system as laid down in the law, we no longer offer sacrifices to

God in order to placate or atone for our sins and actions.

Rather, we offer up to God those entangling sins which retard our obedience to His Word. Thus the commands of the Word of God concerning the leader and his marriage, his children and his household do not go on the altar as entangling sins, but rather are embraced in obedience by the leader.

We do not put obedience to God on the altar. As in the Old Covenant, man is not free to devise his own system of sacrifice. The subjection of offering things up to God to the Word of God has not changed in the New Covenant. The time for the Christian leader, the pastor, the missionary to have considered putting family on the altar was when he was single. Having cried to God and

questions as well. Although the heart is important, it must be accompanied with knowledge and obedience. Simple zeal is not enough. God has both a plan and a purpose for sacrifice and it is not an end, in and of itself. The simple practice of sacrifice is not in and of itself inherently good or pleasing to God. Pagans sacrifice and God's people sacrifice wrongly. Both displease God and result in His judgment on their actions. As a result, obedience to the qualifications of leadership in the area of marriage, children and household are non-negotiable.

Spiritual authority, good intentions nor religious zeal make up for not following the will and plan of God in the offering of sacrifices to God. Failure by spiritual leaders to submit to God in the offering of sacrifices

results in the forfeiture of both authority and position. Nor can spiritual authority subjugate the Word of God in this area to the greater needs of the organization, ministry or church.

We do not sacrifice that which belongs to another. It is often my observation that when Christian leaders, pastors or missionaries come to the crossroads of ministry where they decide to put wife, home and family on the altar, that this is really costing them little in comparison to the cost of saying “no” to ministry activities and “yes” to obedience to God's commands for them in relationship with their family. They are, in reality, sacrificing their wife and their children's offerings, not their own.

We do not make sacrifices of personal inconvenience. This is

what to sacrifice and what is a significant sacrifice than the one making it?

This has never been acceptable to God. God knows what is and is not an acceptable sacrifice and God knows what is best for man in this area. Man was never free simply to bring a sacrifice to an altar and offer it up to God. The time, place, location and even the sacrifice itself was governed by God.

Man has always struggled with this. Throughout the history of Israel under the Old Covenant the prophets and priests fought against the practice of sacrificing on any high place, any object and in any manner. The Israelites resisted this and many errors and tragedies resulted. Even in the time of Jesus, the Pharisees were still enmeshed in this sin of using the practice of sacrifice — of dedicating something to the Lord —

to neglect their responsibilities to their families. “Putting your family on the altar” is the same type of convenient and misplaced zeal as the Pharisees and Jews of Jesus' time who

He was also saying to them, "You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death'; but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, anything of mine you might have been helped by is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."

Mark 7:9–13

“dedicated” possessions to God so they did not have to use them to care for

their families.

It is important that we do not bring the pagan mindset of sacrifice to our New Covenant relationship with God.

One of the problems that young ministers face today is a tendency not to give themselves “ministry credit” for time spent with their families. Thus, if this time is not ministry, it may be given up to God. The solution of course is for ministers to submit their conviction of what is and is not ministry to the Word of God, not their feelings. The Bible clearly teaches that a minister’s family is his ministry and that he is held accountable. Consider this situation. A pastor is having a meal with a family in his church in their home, ministering to them. He then receives a call from a deacon asking him to come deal with a similar problem across town. He replies, “I am sorry, you need to call brother ‘K’, I am in the middle of a ministry situation and cannot leave.” Now consider the same situation, only he is in his own home, ministering to his own family when he gets the call. Chances are he will jump up, leaving his family to go minister to others. If this young minister would just give himself the same ministry “credits” for ministering to his family, as he does for others, he would be able to avoid the error of placing his family on the altar.

There are many Christians who feel that they know what they should or can sacrifice to God. After all, *they* are the ones making the sacrifice. Nothing

could be further from the truth! It is this same mindset, this tendency to sacrifice in our own way that brings ministers to the point of declaring they

are putting their family on the altar. God no more wants your family on the altar in the New Covenant than He wanted child sacrifice on the altar in the

and interpreted by the Word of God we must have all the information on a subject before we make our final application. Thus this passage and others like it, cannot be interpreted and applied outside the boundaries established in I Timothy and Titus. We may not know all that this passage means, but we do know that it does not mean that we are free from the qualifications of Christian leadership in I Timothy and Titus because of this one verse.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE OLD

COVENANT RESTRICTIONS on sacrifice as it applies to the family?

You do not put obedience on the altar. In the Old Covenant, man was not free to sacrifice anything he wanted. It is

important that we do not bring the pagan mindset of sacrifice to our New Covenant relationship with God. We are not free to decide what we will and will not sacrifice. This is decided according to the revealed will of God. If the qualifications of a leader include guidelines concerning his marriage, children and household, then these do not go on the

We do not put obedience on the altar.

altar for the higher call of the ministry. Rather they are the standard of obedience and that which would take away from obedience goes on the altar.

From the beginning, a sacrifice was only acceptable when done in strict obedience to the Word of God. We do not decide how and when to sacrifice, but rather God decides these

leader, pastor or missionary to function actively in the ministry outside the home, then the application of this passage in terms of the Christian leader hating family, will allow them to function actively in their ministry to their wife, children and household responsibilities, just as it does their own

I know men who will use this verse to justify their putting their family on the altar but have no intention of their wife putting them, the children or the running of the household on this self same altar.

life. If the application of this passage to the Christian leader's wife and children is such that they still are responsible to the family, to build a home and to maintain the family identity by their active presence and participation, then this same application must be applied to the Christians

leader, pastor or missionary in his active presence and participation in the family. The saying is, "If it is good for the goose, then it is good for the gander." The Christian leader, pastor or missionary cannot reserve an exclusive application of Scripture for himself, while applying a completely different application and standard for his family.

This brings us to the second observation, since the ministry includes the family, it is not in conflict with the ministry. To say I am putting the family on the altar for the greater service of the ministry is like saying, "God called me to go to Mongolia to minister as a missionary, but I am putting that on the altar and going to a beach resort instead."

We do not obey God by disobeying God. Since the Word of God is understood

Old Covenant sense. We are no more free to sacrifice what and how we please God in the New Covenant than Israel was free to sacrifice on any high place, or any thing they wanted in the Old Covenant. Yet many false errors and tragedies have resulted in man's continued demand to be able to sacrifice to God as he pleases. Sacrificing marriage — the celibacy of the priesthood; sacrificing family — putting them on the altar; abuses of the body, needless repetitive prayers, or monastic lifestyles. These (and more!) have resulted from man's continued insistence that he can sacrifice to God on the basis of his own spiritual intuition, rather than under the strict guidance of the Word of God.

As we look at a short study on the concepts of subjecting sacrifice to obedience, we will seek a

correlation between these Old Covenant principles and the issue today of Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries of putting the family on the altar.

²²And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

²³"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king."

1 Sam 15:22–23

FROM THE BEGINNING, a sacrifice was only acceptable when done in strict obedience to the Word of God.

**Old Covenant teaching:
The prophet Samuel**

makes it very clear to Saul that simply sacrificing was not enough, not an end in itself, and that it must be accompanied by obedience to the Word of God. Saul's rejection of God's commands changed his sacrifice to nothing more than a pagan ritual and disqualified him as a leader of the nation of Israel. Saul found out about the need for obedience the hard way: the result being the loss of his position as the leader of the nation of Israel.

New Covenant

Correlation: We find the same thing today. Many Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries will be in for a rude awakening when they find that they put the wrong thing on the altar, at the wrong place, and at the wrong time. God did not want them to put family on the altar but rather their own ministry ambitions. God did not want them to put family on the altar, but rather the

self-worth and self-actualization they received from ministry activities. They will discover that God's commands concerning the family and their qualifications as leaders were not big picture suggestions, but specific and detailed *commands*. Like Saul, they were not free to sacrifice that which God does not want and keep that which God has commanded to be sacrificed.

GOD GAVE VERY SPECIFIC ORDINANCES pertaining to sacrifices.

Old Covenant

Teaching: There were specific laws for specific sacrifices, be they "peace offerings," "burnt offerings," "grain offerings," "sin offering," or any of the other offerings prescribed and taught by God in the Law. They were to be done in

result, the Christian leader, the pastor or the missionary when interpreting hating his wife and children, he must include the same interpretation and

²⁶ *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."*
Luke 14:26

application to, "even his own life." If your application is to neglect your family for the ministry as a result of "hate," then you must be willing as well to neglect yourself — which includes your career, your ministry, your office, all that goes into who and what you are. Not only this but this passage also speaks of children hating their mother and father. This means the same benign neglect and absenteeism

that characterizes your relationship with the family can be applied as well by your children to you and their mother. I know many pastors who, in the name of this verse, have given up their family life who still very much have a life. It is a life that is built around their own goals and ministry pursuits. It may be sacrificial, and it may be hard — but it is a life. I know men who will use this verse to justify putting their family on the altar, but have no intention of their wife putting them, the children or the running of the household on this same altar. It seems in their understanding of the verse it applies solely to them, although from a careful reading of this passage it is clear that this is not the case. If the application of this passage in terms of the Christian leader's hating himself still allows the Christian

including the sacrificing of children to God is abhorrent to him. In his condemnation of Israel for this practice, God the Holy Spirit makes an interesting statement, "... a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind;" It is not that this was allowed at one time but now is put away. The sacrifice of children never entered the mind of God.

Lastly, the interpretation that Jephthah enrolled his daughter in some type of convent or society of virgin priestesses is not only completely alien to the teachings of the Law concerning the priesthood and the tabernacle but unknown throughout scripture. There were none such convents and have never been convents where men could dedicate their daughters to the Lord in perpetual virginity. The state of virginity in a woman is not a higher

state of purity or sanctification, nor is there a special state of grace for virgins. The cult of virgin worship that has grown up around the virgin Mary should not influence the interpretation of Scripture. The setting aside of women in perpetual virginity has no grounds in Christian scripture nor practice. Rather, this practice is pagan in nature and is a throw-back to the cults of early Rome and Greece. Thus, we completely reject Jephthah's rash vow and his actions towards his daughter as a standard of conduct for Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries.

Q: What about Jesus' commands to His disciples?

Like the Timothy and Titus passages, the family is here understood in the context of the inclusion of all concepts presented. As a

*¹¹Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the LORD.
Lev 7:11*

*³⁷This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering and the ordination offering and the sacrifice of peace offerings...
Lev 7:37*

specific locations, in a prescribed manner, and the item to be offered was as important as the location and manner of the offering.

New Covenant

Correlation: This is still true in the New Covenant today. When we feel especially convicted of sin, when we feel especially grateful to God, when we feel a desire to express our devotion and zeal for God, we are not free to simply offer up our family to God on the altar. We must submit to God's Word concerning the offerings we make to Him. Family is

an area of obedience to God. We do not offer up obedience on the altar. We, in obedience, offer up self to God and fulfill our responsibilities to obey God in the care and stewardship of our family.

ALTHOUGH THE HEART IS IMPORTANT, it must be accompanied with knowledge — with obedience — simple zeal is not enough.

Old Covenant

²For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

³For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

Rom 10:2–3

Teaching: As we have seen with Saul, simple zeal is not enough. We are not

free to establish our own righteousness but rather must submit ourselves to God's Word in all areas of obedience.

New Covenant

Correlation: In our zeal to do things for God, to sacrifice to God, to give all to God, we must be careful to submit our zeal to the will of God as revealed in His holy Word. The zeal which puts wife and children on the altar, allowing the Christian leader, the pastor, or the missionary, to neglect the discipline and instruction of his own children while he evangelizes, disciplines and instructs the rest of the world, is a "zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge." The reaction of these men to defend their actions and to reject the qualifications for their position in I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 for what they see to be their own very special and higher calling of duty,

sacrifice and ministry reveals that they, like the men of Romans 10:1 & 2, are seeking to establish their own righteousness, rather than subject themselves to the righteousness of God as revealed in His Word.

WHAT, THEN, ARE SOME OF THE GUIDELINES for recognizing unacceptable sacrifices? Acceptable worship cannot

¹³"Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see,¹⁴ but in the place which the LORD chooses in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you. Deut 12:13–14

occur in a place and manner of man's choosing, rather than in obedience to God's law.

suggested in these illustrations would be sin as well.

Secondly, if Jephthah had known the Word of God, he would have known there was a sacrifice for a rash or difficult vow provided for in the Law. In Leviticus 27, the stipulations are given for how a man can undo a rash or difficult vow. Jephthah had only to publicly confess his sin

...the only problem is that the command of God for the Christian leader, the pastor, the missionary is not, "place your family on the altar" but rather, "place yourself on the altar"...

before his people and his family, go to the priests and fulfill his duties, as to the Law, to have been freed from this statement. God makes it clear in Jeremiah 19:4–5, that any type of human sacrifice,

embrace any of these by the fact that they happen in the Bible. We understand the historical events in the Bible as sinful actions or righteous actions by the doctrines taught in the Bible. The fact that Jephthah made this rash vow and then even more rashly followed through on it does not anymore establish placing the family on the altar as a doctrine to be practiced by Christian leaders, than does the fact that Abraham rashly, followed his own wife's suggestion and took her handmaid into his tent and impregnated her, establish as a doctrine that ministers can have affairs with their secretaries as long as they are encouraged to do so by their wives. The actions of both men in these Biblical passages are revealed by the doctrines of the Word of God as sin and the applications to both men's actions by ministers as

Time does not permit a full study on this passage, but a few quick observations should settle the issue as to whether this passage justifies New Covenant ministers placing their families on the altar.

Firstly, this passage is narrative in nature and not a doctrinal teaching. It simply accurately reveals to us Jephthah's actions. It does not condone his actions, nor does it apply them to others, it simply reveals them. Many, many questionable and sinful acts are committed by leaders in regards to the family in the book of Judges. Samson marries a prostitute, men raid a festival and carry off young girls to be their wives, a wife is thoughtlessly given to a mob where she is abused and killed, concubines are acquired and cast off... These and many other actions of sin and degradation are recorded. We do not

³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, "If Thou wilt indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, ³¹ then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." Judges 11:30–31

³⁴ When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, behold, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. Now she was his one and only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

³⁵ And it came about when he saw her, that he tore his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you are among those who trouble me; for I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot take it back." Judges 11:34–35

Old Covenant

Teaching: We have touched on this already. Man has from the beginning wrestled with God over this one central aspect of the sacrificial relationship between man and God: man's desire to choose the place, time and means of sacrifice, rather than be subject to the Word of God.

New Covenant

Correlation: We see this same tendency today in the New Covenant application of making sacrifices to God and placing things on the altar to God. Man wants to decide the place, time and means of the sacrifice. To man, his motives, his understanding, his heart is everything. "How can you tell me that God does not want me to give this to Him, when I feel so strongly about putting it on the altar!" This rhetorical attack on the limits of sacrifice placed by

God on man is given to many Bible teachers and pastors today just as it was given to the priests and prophets of old. "If God wants me to put wife and family on the altar to pursue my ministry, who are you to tell me otherwise!"

D AMAGED OR
UNFIT
ANIMALS

²¹ "But if it has any defect, such as lameness or blindness, or any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God."

Deut 15:21

⁸ "But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts."

Mal 1:8

Old Covenant

Teaching: Without the guidance and oversight of God and His revealed Word, man due to his sin nature, naturally degenerates into sacrificing that which is not really a sacrifice at all. In his pride he offers up something which he does not really want, while keeping for himself that which he does not really want to offer up.

New Covenant

Correlation: This is still the case today under the New Covenant. Without the guidance and oversight of God and His revealed Word, man due to his sin

nature, naturally degenerates into sacrificing that which is not really a sacrifice at all. In his pride he offers up his family, his wife, his children, the mundane responsibilities of his house and home, things which he does not find exciting and rewarding, things which he does not really want to do. Putting his family on the altar to pursue the fulfilling, rewarding and exciting aspects of the ministry is really no sacrifice at all. What would be the real sacrifice for this Christian leader was to give up those activities which affirm his self-worth. Sacrifice those

He told us of the early exciting days in the ministry, of the camaraderie of the team, how they traveled from campus to campus, the great things God did, and those early years in the ministry. He told us to follow his example, to put family on the altar. What he did not tell us was that he was estranged from his wife, that his daughter had attempted suicide more than once and that his son was not walking with God.

—Early supervisor in the ministry over coffee at staff conference

messianic picture of a father giving up his only son, as God the father would do and the teaching that God would have us hold nothing back from Him when it comes to obedience to His words and His commands.

In conclusion, the subjection of our will to the Word of God as it pertains to family will never contradict the revealed Word and will of God in I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Thus the application for the Christian leader, the pastor, or the missionary is obedience to God. He should place himself on the altar and fulfill his responsibilities to his wife, to his children and to his household responsibilities.

Q. What about Jephthah's daughter?

This passage has been used to vilify the zeal of Christian service by

exposing Biblical heroes as cold blooded fanatics who would even sacrifice their own daughters to their misplaced zeal, to the justification of placing daughters in monasteries by interpreting his actions as giving her over to some form of celibate temple service, like the pagan vestal virgins of the Greeks, to the justification of benign neglect of family by pastors who would place not simply one child but entire families on the altar. All three of these are misunderstandings and misuse of this historical revelation of God the Holy Spirit of the actions of Jephthah.

...the interpretation that Jephthah enrolled his daughter in some type of convent or society of virgin priestesses is not only completely alien to the teachings of the Law concerning the priesthood and the tabernacle, but unknown throughout scripture.

anything from the Lord in obedience to His commands is still a very valid one and applicable today. The only problem is that the command of God for the Christian leader, the pastor, the missionary is not, “place your family on the altar” but rather, “place yourself on the altar”, which among my fellow professionals is a far less popular message.

Thirdly, not only has the prophecy and picture been fulfilled, but with the institution of the Law by God this type of sacrifice

was specifically forbidden. Isaac was not sacrificed and it was never God’s intention for Isaac to be sacrificed. Later, with the giving of the Law, God forbade all human sacrifice in general and specifically forbade the sacrifice of family. The revelation of God’s dealings with Abraham, Isaac and the sacrifice was not and was never meant to be the instruction for pastors to neglect their responsibilities to their families for the sake of their ministry careers. Rather it was the

The classic illustration of the rash vow is when the zealous single minister or missionary develops a certain sacrificial style of living. Then he decides to marry, but is faced with all the “commitments” he has made to the Lord for the ministry. Rather than re-think these, he puts first wife and then later family on the altar so that he might continue ministering as if he were single. In my discussions with missionary, pastoral and staff children over the years in the college ministry, in my sessions on mission boards and with mission teams, one thing has become evident: The primary handicap that these children faced was not cultural or ministerial; but rather, it was the simple fact that they were raised in a home with a distracted non-resident father.

activities through which he feels his life has meaning and significance. Sacrifice those activities which give him affirmation. Place those things on the altar to fulfill his responsibilities to his family as commanded by God. For the Christian leader and for the pastor, *that* would be the true sacrifice, to put self on the altar, and in obedience, to go home and fulfill your responsibilities, obeying the Word of God.

THAT WHICH BELONGS TO ANOTHER

²⁴However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."
2 Sam 24:24

Old Covenant Teaching: There are a

number of cases in the Word of God where men of God were faced with offering up something the easy way, as provided for them by another or offering up a sacrifice the hard way, by sacrificing their own possessions, rather than those of another. David proclaimed, “I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing.”

New Covenant

Correlation: It is often my observation that when Christian leaders, pastors or missionaries come to the crossroads of ministry where they must decide between family or ministry, putting wife, home and family on the altar is really costing them little in comparison to the cost of saying “no” to ministry activities, and “yes” to obedience to God’s commands for them in relationship with their family. This is, in fact,

their wife and their children's sacrifice, not their own. The family, deprived of the spiritual protection and leadership of an attentive husband and father makes the greatest sacrifice at all, but not willingly. This sacrifice is made for them by the husband. Many times they ask for this sacrifice and are freely given it by a more than obliging father/husband. If David had asked Araunah to freely give the oxen, sledges and other items needed for the sacrifice, he would have done so. But not only would David not ask, this he would not accept. In the same way Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries, must not only not ask the family to step up on the altar, but must refuse this wrong sacrifice when offered freely. They instead must step up on the altar themselves. *They must pay*

the price, not the family. They must not put the family on the altar and in effect, "offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing."

C HILDREN OR
FAMILY

³¹"You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods."

Old Covenant

Teaching: In the law nothing was more clear than the prohibition of human or family sacrifice. Forbidden as a sacrifice to God, and compared to the most evil and wicked of satanic rituals, it was judged without exception by the prophets of the Bible.

*¹² And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."
Gen 22:12*

said, in Genesis 22:2, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." and Abraham obeyed. God says to the 21st century Christian leader, pastor or missionary, in I Timothy 3, 5 and Titus 1, "An overseer, then...

- ✓ *"must provide for his own, and especially for those of his household"*
- ✓ *"the husband of one wife" (3Xs)*
- ✓ *"he must be one who manages his own household well" (3X's)*

- ✓ *"keeping his children under control with all dignity"*
- ✓ *"having children who believe,"*
- ✓ *"good managers of their children"*

The Christian leader, pastor or missionary then takes this command from God and obeys, just as Abraham obeys. But there has been a slight change in plans. He discovers that what goes on the altar is not his wife, not his son but rather himself. It is my observation that many men find it far more dramatic to put their wife or son on the altar than to crawl up on the altar themselves.

Secondly, this sacrifice was of a Messianic nature, a prophetic picture of God's sacrifice of His own son. This prophesy and picture has been fulfilled. The example of Abraham being willing to not hold back

If you cannot delegate these actions, and since marriage, children and household responsibilities are on the same list, you can no more delegate them, than you can delegate the others.

Qualifications for the ministry are not to be seen as a task list, a do list, but rather a list of personal traits and responsibilities being personally fulfilled and exemplified by the candidate or minister. It is not enough that someone in the church is sober, *the pastor must be sober*. It is not enough that someone in the church is faithful to his wife, *the pastor must be faithful to his wife*. It is not enough that, because of the teaching of the pastor, men in the church have good reputations, *the pastor must have a good reputation*. Finally, it is not enough that Children's minister, Youth minister, Sunday School teachers, counselors, educators and

other workers in the church are willing to care for the Christian leader, the pastor, the missionary's family, but these men must personally fulfill these responsibilities; they cannot be delegated away.

Q: What about Abraham offering up Isaac on the altar?

A: Firstly, this sacrifice was not Abraham's idea; it was God's. Abraham did not wake up one morning and say, "I have decided to make the ultimate sacrifice for God..." rather God came to Abraham. We as ministers must be willing to accept the same authority of God over our family and ministry as Abraham did. Rather than coming to God with our family on the altar, we should come to God's Word with self on the altar, ready to obey no matter what God may say. God came to Abraham and

New Covenant
Correlation: In the New Covenant, Christians leaders, pastors and missionaries are not called to put their families on the altar. Rather just the opposite, the failure to care for your family, the failure to bring your children to faith, the failure to manage your home and children in an orderly and dignified way disqualifies the leader from his position of service. God does not receive the family when placed upon the altar by God, but rather takes it off of the altar, gives it back to the Christian leader, pastor or missionaries, gives him with this returned offering the Word of God in I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 — and then in no uncertain way warns him that if he does not fulfill his responsibilities in these areas that God will take from him (but not his

family) his position as a minister.

EVEN SEEMINGLY INSIGNIFICANT INSTRUCTIONS are important to God.

¹⁸You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.

Lev 2:11

¹¹No grain offering, which you bring to the LORD, shall be made with leaven, for you shall not offer up in smoke any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to the LORD.

Exodus 23:18

Old Covenant

Teaching: Surely many of the commands of God concerning the proper way to sacrifice and exactly what may be sacrificed seemed insignificant to the Israelites. Leavened bread, not left till morning... honey forbidden to be offered by fire... What is

the big deal? Well, this can't be that significant... details, details, details... They were not insignificant to God, however. Every command God gave and gives concerning sacrifices made to Him are significant.

New Covenant

Correlation: In the same way, many Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries would protest, "In the light of the great needs of my ministry and the great call of my ministry, what do the details of I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 matter? What is the big deal? This can't be that significant... details, details, details... God is a big picture sort of God, and in the big picture my family is a good offering and one which God will honor and bless." But this is not true, it was not true of Saul and it will not be true of you.

GOD'S CHOSEN LEADERSHIP DID NOT TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER GOD'S WORD. In fact, when God's chosen leadership deviated from the Word of God, as it applies to sacrifice, that leadership was forfeit.

¹⁹ "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

²⁰ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites..."

1 Sam 15:19-20

Old Covenant

Teaching: Many well-meaning men place their family on the altar as an expression of misplaced zeal for God. When push came to shove, Saul made

Q: What about delegating these responsibilities? Isn't it enough that they get taken care of even if I do not personally see to them myself?

A: The passages in I Timothy and Titus on the qualifications of the Christian leader look not merely to the results, but also to the man. In other words it is not enough that they happen, but the leader must also personally personify these characteristics. He must personally fulfill these responsibilities.

Again this question is made simple by looking at the commands concerning

Qualifications for the ministry are not to be seen as a task list, a do list, but rather a list of personal traits and responsibilities being personally fulfilled and exemplified by the candidate or minister.

marriage, family and household management in the context of the other qualifications listed in I Timothy 3, I Timothy 5 and Titus 1. Are they ones which God is happy with "as long as they get done," without reference to whether or not you do it personally or delegate it to someone else?

Can you delegate...

- "Sobriety", while you are a drunk for Jesus?
- "Husband of one wife", while you are a womanizer for Jesus?
- "Not fond of sordid gain", while you are getting rich off the business of the ministry?
- Can you delegate "good reputation", while you by your actions, squander and lose your reputation before men by your words and actions?

non-resident father, immersing himself in the ministry. When his wife had a complete nervous breakdown and had to be hospitalized many things were discussed from satanic attack to psychological disorders. I was appalled and expressed my shock that not only was the missionary not viewed as the root cause but in addition he was not to be disciplined for his actions. He, in fact, viewed himself as the victim as he had to take time away from the ministry to care for his wife. The implication being if she had been stronger, if she had been more spiritual, he would have been able to stay on the field. How dare she burn up when placed on the altar by her husband! What is spiritual about placing your wife on the altar and then watching her burn up, or in this case burn out? How was it that

the missionary was in such good physical and mental shape while his family was in shambles? These cases seem to always have one thing in common: the sacrificial minister always seems to come out unscathed when the family goes on the altar. But then when you think about it, after all, he put them on the altar rather than crawling up on it himself.

IT IS AT THIS TIME IN THE study that many have lined up their “What abouts...” Hopefully none of these are human examples, as the reason for these seeming contradictory success stories have been exposed by the Samson principle (page 4). Rather it is hoped you bring some passages of Scripture to the forefront. Below we will touch on the major objections most often brought when teaching on this subject.

a command decision — not only for himself but for the nation of Israel. He made a decision to not submit to the exact wording and commands of God concerning what was to be sacrificed. He was God’s chosen leader of the nation and he decided he would judge what was necessary on a case by case basis. This, however, was not the case. Saul was indeed God’s chosen leader, but when he failed to obey God in the area of sacrifice, he forfeited his position as leader. He was to lead in the obedience of the Law, not in the disobedience of God’s commands.

He was lifted up as an example of the great work God could do when a man was fully given to the call of the ministry. Because of his ministry, student workers went out across the US and even the world, many students came to Christ — all this, and more. What was not lifted up was the constant friction and periodic separations with his wife, that his oldest daughter had left the faith, that his son was an alcoholic and that two of his children had to be raised outside his home.

—Challenge to young staff at staff conference.

New Covenant
Correlation: The same is true for Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries today. We are not free to make a command decision to not submit to the exact wording of the qualifications of our office in I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We are to lead in obedience to God’s commands concerning marriage and family, not in disobedience. When we fail to do so we forfeit our position as leaders.

IN THE NEW COVENANT IT IS EQUALLY TRUE — God carefully

regulates what and how we offer up sacrifices to Him. We do not simply announce a sacrifice, it must be subject to the will and Word of God. God has been fully satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. No other offering is needed.

*¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.
Heb 10:18*

As Christian leaders, as pastors, as missionaries, we do not need to look around us for sacrifices that will satisfy God. We do not need to look for a sacrifice or offering worthy of repayment of the debt owed God. It was freely given and freely paid. There is no longer an offering for sin. In my opinion, many well-meaning men place their family on the altar as an expression of misplaced zeal for God. They are so broken by their own sin,

they are so thankful for their salvation, they seek to offer up to God the ultimate sacrifice: their family. The only problem is that there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. Just as when Abraham's lifted hand was stayed by God, who had prepared an acceptable sacrifice. So the Christian Leader, the Pastor, the Missionary who brings his family to the altar of Christian service will be stayed by God, if only they will be attentive to the voice of the Lord. They are offering up what God neither requires, desires or receives. God desires these men to embrace their responsibility to wife, family and household as laid down by God the Holy Spirit in I Timothy 3; I Timothy 5 and Titus 1. These passages are written especially for Christian leaders. What goes on the altar are those sins which keep them from being the husbands, fathers and

sacrificial labors. Then when his family craters, and he has to be asked to step back or step down they sit around in the board room, drink coffee and say, "Why did he not take better care of his family? When will these guys ever learn?" The fact that your board or church or ministry will allow you to put your family on the altar does not free you from the consequences of your actions, either before man or before God.

WHEN A

MINISTER BY HIS
ACTIONS BURNS his

The fact that your board or church or ministry will allow you to put your family on the altar does not free you from the consequences of your actions, either before man or before God.

family up (or out) on the altar, the exoneration by those to whom he is responsible in a temporal sense, does not exonerate him in the eyes of God.

A phenomenon that I have noticed yet is completely inexplicable is that when a Christian leader, pastor or missionary places his family on the altar and then subsequently burned up (or out), the leader, pastor or missionary, entrusted as spiritual head of the home and protector of wife and family, is seen to be somehow the victim of the event.

I can remember clearly sitting in a review session of a sister mission organization. The case before us was of a missionary who had taken his family into a very difficult situation, made it more difficult by his decisions concerning their lifestyle and then functioned as a

is waiting for the man to repent and receive the blessing of God. It is not forever lost and a great disservice is done by a board or committee which not only deceives itself but allows its ministers to continue on in needless and fruitless deception.

Do not expect a supervisor or pastor who sacrificed (wife, children, household affairs...) for the ministry to have any regard for your (wife, children, household affairs...) when it comes to the expansion of the ministry.

If this man has sacrificed his own wife, or children or family for the ministry he will have no compunctions at all about sacrificing your wife or children or health.

If this man has sacrificed his own wife, or children or family for the ministry he will have no hesitancy about exhorting you to do the same.

The willingness of others to allow or even encourage you to sacrifice your family for your ministry does not free you from the commands of God in this area. The Christian leader, minister or missionary needs to understand that the responsibility for the application of the passages in I Timothy and Titus rests sole upon his shoulders. He cannot expect others to tell him to fulfill these responsibilities for him. They are the qualifications for his post by which he will be evaluated. They are clearly set out by God the Holy Spirit, and he must see to them. I have seen this over and over again. An organization, church or mission board, allows or even encourages the workaholic tendencies of one of its members. It is after all to their advantage that so much numerical and financial growth results from this man's

family men God has called them to be, not the wife, children and home God has called them to care for and to nurture.

THE OLD SELF
GOES ON THE
ALTAR.

⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;
Rom 6:6

We do not bring the fallen failed family values and priorities of the world to our ministries. As the executive, the professional, the career military man places his family on the altar of his career, we do not emulate this by similarly placing the family on the altar of the ministry. Rather, we as Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries offer the world a valid alternative to the chaos that commonly

passes for home life in the world. The driven lifestyle of the workaholic non-resident father goes on the altar. The world's values which are revealed in the statistics of burnt out wives, failed marriages and bitter resentful children goes on the altar.

CONFORMITY TO
THE WORLD
GOES ON THE
ALTAR:

We do not emulate the world in our priorities, schedules and values when

¹ I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Rom 12:1-2

it comes to the family. Rather we are transformed by the Word of God. The “PK” — the preachers kid, the “MK” — the missionaries kid, the children of Christian leaders world wide should all have the same testimony. “My father was a great dad, a great family man, he was always there for mom and us kids. It wasn’t like that in my friends homes where their dads were always busy traveling, working nights and weekends and when at home either on the phone or in front of the computer. No it was not like that for us. We had the best dad in the world, one devoted to us. It was because of him and the time he gave us that I have the testimony I have today. Other kid’s dads might miss their games, their awards ceremonies, their birthdays but not my dad, he was always there for us. When I read of the faithfulness of God the

Father in the Bible, I think of Dad. My dad was the envy of all the kids in the school.”

As Christian leaders, as pastors, and as missionaries, our children should be the envy of their friends. Our lives and our priorities should offer a stark contrast to the world around us, not conformed to the world’s family values but instead transformed by the Word of God. This conformity is proof of the will of God, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

OUR GOODS AND SERVICES can go on the altar, but not our families:

5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
1 Pet 2:5

forfeited their position. Due to their giftedness and their benefits to the institution, church or mission board, they may be maintained in their position, but these oversight committees do not trump the Word of God. They do not have the power to extend authority and ministry where God has withheld it. By

allowing the minister to continue on in a man-ordained position from which God has removed him simply extends the period of fruitlessness for him in terms of his riches in heaven and personal spiritual growth. Romans 11:29 clearly teaches that gifts and callings are irrevocable. The ministry

As a young father and campus minister I was invited by an older retired missionary to go on a three month speaking tour with him. It was a great honor and I was initially both complimented and excited. As I began to get the details it occurred to me that I would be leaving Eleanor at home with the children for three months while I literally traveled the world to exotic locales and exciting venues. I began to reflect on the impact this would have not only on my relationship with my four elementary school age children, but on my relationship with Eleanor as well. Back home birthdays, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years would all pass by without me. I could see in his face the disappointment when I turned him down. The disappointment not just in me not going, but the disappointment, as he saw it, in my lack of faith, vision and willingness to sacrifice for the ministry by the putting of my children on the altar. It only occurred to me later that this man was estranged from his adult children, having sacrificed his relationship with his own children, he would have no hesitancy in exhorting me to sacrifice my relationship with my own children.

since forfeited his position because of his failure as a husband, a father and care giver. The church or board may go ahead and leave him in his position, the numbers may continue to roll in, the budget may grow, the tasks may be faithfully accomplished, everything may seem to be normal but God has lifted His hand. When we evaluate the work of God we do not do so by sight, but by faith. We do so on the basis of the Holy Word of God. And where God has disqualified a man, no matter the what the organization says, the man is disqualified.

We see this as true of such pseudo Christian groups as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarian Churches, etc. — they have pastors, churches and elders which go recognized by the state and by man, but not by God. They are listed in the phone book, they may be registered

with the state, they may have tax ID's and they may have a standing in the community, parking lots, buildings, vacation Bible schools, and more. In every way, to the human eye and in every aspect of appearance they are what they claim to be: a church. Right down to the sign in front of their building. But they are *not* a church, because they are *not* recognized by God. Nothing in all the earth, no authority in heaven or on earth can change that. *God* and *God* alone decides what a church is, what a Christian is, what a minister is, what an elder is, and what a deacon is. Man may give the position and the results may come rolling in, but that affects absolutely nothing.

THIS PRINCIPLE IS ALSO TRUE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS, pastors and missionaries who have (by their actions)

I have often heard a Christian leader, pastor or missionary proudly say how he put his family on the altar, but rarely do I hear this:

- Ø “I was going to get new office equipment but I put that on the altar to fulfill my responsibilities to my family.”
- Ø “I was going to go on this ministry trip but I put it on the altar to fulfill my responsibilities to my family.”
- Ø “I was going to take on this new ministry responsibility but I put it on the altar to fulfill my responsibility to my family.”
- Ø “There were some really exciting opportunities available to me, but I put them on the altar to fulfill my responsibility to my family.”

Our spiritual sacrifices must be acceptable to God through Jesus Christ and as such they must conform to the Word of God as it pertains to the Christian leader, pastor and missionary in I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

OBEDIENCE DOES NOT GO ON THE ALTAR.

We do not need to be more conscientious than God. We do not need to be more meticulous in our service than God. We do not decide on our own to set aside some of the qualifications of a Christian leader, pastor or missionary as being too soft and undemanding that we might attain to an even higher level of service, a more perfect commitment to the ministry than that laid out by God the Holy Spirit. We do not look at God's commands in I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3

and Titus 1 and then reflect, “I can do better than that.” The commands of God regarding the Christian leader, pastor or missionary in I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 do not go on the altar. Rather, that which supplants obedience in heart or in action goes on the altar.

As Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries, we take that which is in us which fights against conformity to God’s standards for us and our family in I Timothy 5:8; I

Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and we place *that* — no matter how painful, no matter how distressing, no matter how humiliating — we place *that* on the altar and watch it burn. It is not obedience to I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 which goes on the altar. It is our disobedience to these standards which we offer up to God, not being conformed to the World but rather transformed by Christ, by the Word of God.

³¹“You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

Deut 12:31

¹⁰“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer...

Deut 18:10

³But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out from before the sons of Israel.

II Ki 16:3

nothing could be further from the truth. The qualifications in I Timothy and Titus are not given for our consideration and reference as we choose the candidate best suited for the job, rather they are God’s standards which He is both informing and imposing on the church. God is not asking us to keep these characteristics in mind as we make our decision, He is telling us of His decision concerning the acceptability of the candidate. These qualifications are set by God and we do not have the authority to overturn them. If we proceed despite the factors of family being such that the candidate is disqualified, then we proceed by ourselves. God’s clearly revealed Word has spoken and God will not change.

It is possible to maintain a spiritual position by men which is not recognized by God. Many Christian

organizations, churches and mission boards allow this to take place. Sure, it is true his teenagers are out of control, (or) it is true his wife is plagued by headaches, stays in her room and can barely function, (or) it is true that his wife rarely participates in his ministry activities, (or) it is true his children are not active in church, (or) it is true that his family is in and out of counseling, (or) it’s true that his first marriage ended in divorce, (or) it is true that his child is not a believer, (or) it is true that he is rarely home due to his work or speaking schedule, but... he is so gifted, blessed, (or) the hand of God is on him, (or) he is the founder, (or) he brings in so much money, (or) he brings in so many people, (or) he has written so many books... and the list goes on. The truth is, though, that everyone knows that he has long

Christian leader and his family.

Remember, these qualifications are set by God, not man.

MAN DOES NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO EXCUSE DISOBEDIENCE. I have seen this time and time again. A Christian organization, a search committee in a church, a church board or mission board sitting around a table discussing a candidate's qualifications. When the family comes up there is a real hesitancy to

speak decisively, even when the problem is clear. Discussions begin to move around the theme of what is most important, of his gifts and his calling, of the breadth and results of his ministry, of the faithfulness of his service, of his good character and pleasing personality. It soon becomes clear what is about to take place. The board is about to excuse the candidate from meeting the qualifications based on family. They feel that they have the final say, and looking at the big picture feel they can pass over these flaws. Yet

I keenly remember an experience in this area concerning my own child... This child became involved as a freshman in a campus ministry racked with controversy. The campus at this time was without a full time staff person and was being led by a missionary on furlough. One of the student leaders drank, smoked and swore and saw these vices as simple social mores that open cultural doors to the evangelizing of non-Christians. As I sought to express my concern to a person in a position of responsibility in this Christian group, it suddenly occurred to me that the man I was talking to had sacrificed his own children for his ministry. He would have no compunctions about sacrificing my child as well.

THE FAMILY AND LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH (I Timothy 3:1–13; 5:8; Titus 1:1–9)

The really sad thing about these qualifications is that, when it comes to the pastorate, many deacon boards or churches will disqualify their pastor from service if he fulfills the qualifications from God the Holy Spirit as they pertain to his marriage, children and household affairs. In the same way, many pastors will disqualify a man from being considered as a staff member, a deacon, or lay leader if he fulfills the qualifications from God the Holy Spirit as they pertain to his marriage, children and household affairs. Many para-church leaders or mission organizations will pass over a man for the sole reason of his fulfillment of the qualifications from God the Holy Spirit as it pertains to

his marriage, children and household affairs. In each case, to qualify by the standards of God the Holy Spirit requires too much time away from the business of the ministry.

Many churches, Christian organizations and mission boards are just as ruthless and unforgiving as any large corporation when it comes to their staff. In their zeal to produce results the bar is set so high, with expectations being such in terms of work ethic, that the standards of God the Holy Spirit in the area of marriage, children and household affairs are simply out of the question.

Having touched on this subject in the opening comments let's now go a little deeper into this passage as it pertains specifically to the minister and his family and the altar of sacrifice.

THE CHRISTIAN LEADER AS A CHRISTIAN

This is the most basic factor in our responsibility to our family. This responsibility is so basic, in fact, that to violate it not only brings into question continued ministry, but the very witness of faith is compromised. “But if anyone does not provide for his own, especially for those of his household...” To fail in the material care of your family groups you not in a class worthy to be considered pagan, but worse than that, “worse than an unbeliever.” Our goal as Christian leaders, pastors and teachers, will of course be much higher and in I Timothy 5:8; I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, God sets the bar for the family life of ministers. In the area of our finances, we do not put our families well being on the altar in

pursuit of our own ministry career, but rather we do the exact opposite, we put decisions concerning our ministry career on the altar in obedience to God’s commands concerning our family.

THE ELDER QUALIFICATIONS (I Timothy 3:1–12): 16

In first Timothy 3:16, the qualifications of an elder are presented. Of these, four, 25% pertain to the family. These are not to be viewed as gifts or callings. The question is not whether the potential or capacity for ministry is present, but rather as qualifications. Are these qualities functioning and in place? Not qualifications in the sense of, “Does the person holding the position have the ability to accomplish the job?” Instead, “Is the person holding the

You do not put “the husband of one wife” on the altar.

You do not put “children who believe” on the altar.

You do not put “keeping his children under control with all dignity” on the altar.

You do not put, “good managers of their children” on the altar.

You do not put “managing his own household well” on the altar.

You do not put those qualities of a minister, deacon or lay leader’s marriage, children, family and household, as commanded by God the Holy Spirit, on the altar.

Nor do you put such parallel and dependent qualifications as “hospitality”, “good reputation” and “dignity” on the altar out of deference to the fact that the behavior of his wife

and children make these ministries impractical — if not impossible.

Nor does caring for financial needs of your family go on the altar because you have squandered your resources on your own ministerial fiscal speculations. You do not squander your savings, send your wife out of the home to work, delay education savings for the children, scrimp on the necessities of house and home to bank roll and make possible your ministry. You do not put the financial care of your family on the altar.

You do not put family on the altar but rather the covetousness, the ambition, the self will, the vain glory, the emotional high, the misplaced zeal for God that causes you to put the business of the ministry above the obedience of the Word of God in the area of the

Now honestly, could you see any of these statements being taken seriously at a church board or denominational meeting? Those making such bombastic statements would be shouted down.

IT IS NOT OBEDIENCE THAT GOES ON THE ALTAR in these areas but rather disobedience.

You do not put sobriety on the altar, but drunkenness instead.

You do not put faithfulness to your wife on the altar but instead lust.

You do not put living in a sacrificial manner on the altar but rather the love of money

You do not put sound teaching on the altar but rather the tendency to compromise and accommodate false teaching.

This seems clear to us, but

how many of us, after laughing at the first list, nod in reverence at the dedication of lay leaders, pastors, missionaries and evangelists who proclaim with solemnity that they have put family on the altar? “I know what the Bible says about the home and family, but the needs are so great and the calling so high, I have put my family on the altar for Jesus.”

You do not put providing for your family’s material needs on the altar.

The qualifications in I Timothy and Titus are not given for our consideration and reference as we choose the candidate best suited for the job. Rather, they are God’s standards which He is both informing and imposing on the church. God is not asking us to keep these characteristics in mind as we make our decision. He is telling us of His decision concerning the acceptability of the candidate.

position acting in obedience to God’s standards that he might remain in this position to accomplish the job?” The question is not “Is he gifted to do these things when called upon?” but rather, “Is he doing these things which all Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries are called upon to fulfill in order to hold their position?” As you review this list reflect on how ludicrous is the position of placing any one of them on the altar. (Note, the qualifications as they pertain to family are in italics.)

One of the results of the failure to follow the guidelines of scripture for Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries is that once this culture has been ingrained in a church or ministry, leadership is no longer sensitive or discerning in this area. Thus when men fall into sin, marriages disintegrate or children rebel, statements like “We never saw it coming,” and “No one had any idea,” are said as if they were not in and of themselves a condemnation of the organizational leadership and culture. In a recent consultation with a Christian organization this statement was made as if to in some way justify or mitigate the responsibility. My response was, “Now you have two problems, the sin of the pastor and the sin of the institutional culture that could exist without ever ‘seeing it coming’.”

1. (3:2) above reproach,
2. *the husband of one wife*,
3. temperate,
4. prudent,
5. respectable,
6. hospitable,
7. able to teach,
8. not addicted to wine or pugnacious,
9. gentle,
10. uncontentious,
11. free from the love of money.
12. (3:4) *He must be one who manages his own household well*,

13. keeping his children under control with all dignity

14. (3:5) (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?);

15. and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

16. a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

THE ELDER QUALIFICATIONS (I Timothy 3:1– (Titus 1:5 – 9): 18

Titus 1 entails a second list of qualifications for Christian leadership. Here statements pertaining to the family are very exacting. Where the list in

“An overseer must...

- Ø Provide for his own, and especially for those of his household
- Ø The husband of one wife (3Xs)
- Ø He must be one who manages his own household well, (3X's)
- Ø Keeping his children under control with all dignity
- Ø Having children who believe,
- Ø Good managers of their children”

I Timothy has some wiggle room, some room for interpretation, and some subjective aspects to the application, the qualifications as presented in Titus 1:6 are exact, and easily verifiable as they pertain to the family. In answer to the question, “How many wives have you had?” there can only be one answer: “I am the husband of one wife.” and “Are your children

boards selection process. During the exchange of ideas he happens to say with pride:

- “There are so many drunks, I have put sobriety on the altar. I am a drunk for Jesus.”
- “There are so many needy women, I have put husband of one wife on the altar. I am a womanizer for Jesus.”
- “There is such an opportunity to make money in the ministry I have put the love of money and sordid gain on the altar. I am a money making machine for Jesus! Jesus is using the ministry to make me rich.”
- “There are so many religions and beliefs out there I have put sound teaching on the altar. I am a polytheist for Jesus.”

at home, but as a minister I have placed my family on the altar.”

The sad truth is that most leaders, pastors, missionaries do not have to even voice this disclaimer. The placing of the family on the altar and the resulting low expectations of performance in marriage and family by the Christian community as a whole makes it completely unnecessary. What should disqualify them is, if not a source of pride, is at least one of empathy.

Let's digress at this point to a little mental role playing. You are a member of a personnel committee of a Christian organization, or a search committee of a large church or a member of a missions board selection committee interviewing pastors. You are questioning this Christian leader, pastor or missionary as part of the

manifest them in their totality. Would we be satisfied with any of the following statements when interviewing a Christian leader, pastor or missionary?

- “It is true that I am a drunk, but that is my only failing in this list.”
- “It is true that I am a womanizer, but that is my only failing in this list.”
- “It is true that I

have no reputation in my church or community but that is my only failing in this list.”

- “It is true that I do not hold to the faith, to the message of salvation, but that is my only failing in the list.”

These would clearly disqualify any candidate, but now take the family, “It is true I have problems

“I had just been asked to join the team as a staff supervisor. It was a great compliment. I was a little anxious, as it would require me to be on the road and away from home about 25% of the time. At the first meeting the team of supervisors met for prayer. These men were all ten to twenty years older than I was. The first began to share the grief he was experiencing in his family. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he shared how the years of neglect of family for the ministry were now bearing fruit. The next man began to share along the same vein. Tears formed in his eyes also and rolled down his cheeks. One by one, each man went around and shared the same story of years of placing the family on the altar for God and how it was now bearing fruit in their marriages and in their families. At the end of the prayer time I handed in my resignation as a staff supervisor and went home to my wife and children. The man who took my place now has the same testimony as the others.”

believers?” again, there can only be one answer: “Yes!” It is amazing, though, how difficult the church has made these two simple questions. Just as in the Old Covenant where the Israelites continually sought to alter the parameters and instructions of sacrifice, so today, the church seeks to do the same. “The husband of one wife,” and “children who believe,” are put on the altar with the family and a new standard for sacrifice and obedience is derived. A standard which is more conducive to the goals of the organization, the church and the lifestyles of its leaders.

1. (1:6) above reproach,
2. *the husband of one wife,*
3. *having children who believe,*

4. not accused of dissipation
5. rebellion.
6. (1:7) above reproach as God's steward,
7. not self-willed,
8. not quick-tempered,
9. not addicted to wine,
10. not pugnacious,
11. not fond of sordid gain,
12. (1:8)but hospitable,
13. loving what is good,
14. sensible,
15. just,
16. devout,
17. self-controlled,
18. (1:9)holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

THE DEACON QUALIFICATIONS (I Timothy 3: 8 – 13): 13

In the second half of I Timothy 3, God extends the qualifications of family beyond that of the pastor and elder to the roles of service in the church as carried out by its deacons. Three areas are spoken to: marriage, children and household affairs. As mentioned earlier, the sad thing about the ministry of laymen in the church is that a pastor, having placed his family on the altar, having set aside the qualifications of God the Holy Spirit, for those of his own choosing, will not hesitate to exhort and demand those in his service do the same. These men, in a misguided effort to reach a higher level of sacrifice and service to God, in effect come to serve man, not God, as they place obedience to God on the altar and choose man's standards

for the ministry over those standards set by God the Holy Spirit.

1. (8) men of dignity,
2. not double-tongued,
3. addicted to much wine
4. fond of sordid gain,
5. (9) holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.
6. (10) And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.
7. (11) Women must likewise be dignified,
8. not malicious gossips,
9. temperate,
10. faithful in all things.
11. (12) *Let deacons be husbands of only one wife,*
12. *good managers of their children*
13. *their own households.*

“He had one of the greatest teaching ministries going. No one ever questioned his family. Sure there were indications, but God was blessing his ministry so greatly. How could a man with a ministry like that possibly be out of God's will? It was only later that we realized all of the biblical principles in his life that were being overlooked or violated for the sake of the ministry.” Missionary staff supervisor explaining why a missionary on his team was allowed to get to the point where his child attempted suicide and his wife left him.

to receiving riches in heaven that I put my family on hold, on the altar, to focus on my ministry career.” This sacrifice, the placing of family upon the altar, is one which God does not require. Not only that, it is one He does not accept. It is one which is, in fact,

forbidden! It is one, which if made, rather than lifting us to a higher plane of service and devotion to God, it, instead, disqualifies us from the very service we sought so earnestly to pursue.

SUMMATION: WE CANNOT BE ARBITRARY in the hierarchy of the selection process in the placing of these qualifications on the altar. In giving us this list, the Holy Spirit gives no particular emphasis to the qualifications, but rather lists them as being of equal value and worth. This means that if those qualifications pertaining to family can be placed on the altar, any other qualification listed in these passages can also be placed on the altar.

The qualifications in these passages are holistic in their impact of the candidate. He is to

only this time, it refers to the children. They are under his management, this denotes both direct supervision as well as long range planning.

These are not optional areas. These areas cannot be delegated. These areas cannot be placed on the altar. These are qualifications for positions of service within the Body of Christ. Yet they are easily laid aside by the church and by men. They are easily, in our minds, moved from that set of obedience, to that set of luxury, and having been so moved, quickly and piously placed on the altar with the other optional, entangling, luxuries of life and burned as a sacrifice to God. Can you imagine a man applying for a promotion within his company? A policy has clearly been laid out that men aspiring to this new position must have taken the initiative to get their

MBA from a local college. During the interview process it comes to light that the candidate has not done this. He casually replies, "I was so committed to the job and to getting this promotion that I put my MBA on hold to focus on my career." Or a football player explaining to his coach that he was so committed to the team, that instead of coming to team meetings, he was out playing pickup games to work on his moves? These illustrations are ludicrous, but do not we as Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries bring this same mentality to God. We are so committed to our ministry that we do not have time for those very things which God has clearly listed to be qualifiers of this very same ministry to which we espouse such devotion. We come to God saying the same thing, "I was so committed to the ministry,

WORD STUDY: INTERPRETATION IS SUBJECT TO DEFINITION

When we consolidate the qualifications which are repeated we come up with six qualifications for Christian leaders, pastors and missionaries. Knowing that the interpretation of any passage is subject to the definitions of the key words in the passage, we will now turn to a look at these key words in the original Greek.

"An overseer must..."

"Must" (I Timothy 3:1) - 1163 dei (/die/); an impersonal verb, signifying "it is necessary" or "one must," of necessity as to what is required that something may be brought about, it is (was, etc.) necessary (as binding): KJV-- , be meet, must (needs), (be) need (-ful), ought, should.

Must:

*1. **provide** for his own, and especially for those of his household*

"Provide": (I Timothy 5:8) 4306 pronoo (/pron-o-eh'-o/); from 4253 and 3539; to consider in advance, i.e. look out for beforehand (actively, by way of maintenance for others; middle voice by way of circumspection for oneself): KJV — provide (for).

2. be the husband of one wife (3Xs)

Be "One" or "First": (I Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6) 3391 mia (/mee'-ah/); irregular feminine of 1520; one or first: is translated "first" in certain occurrences of the phrase "on the first day of the week," e. g., <Luke 24:1; 1 Cor. 16:2>; cf. A, and see DAY; also in <Titus 3:10>, of a "first" admonition to a heretical man. KJV — a

(certain), + agree, first, one, X other. Is translated "one" as in numerical order, not "one" as in the article "a".

Examples where this word is rendered "first"

Matt 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

Acts 20:7 And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

1 Cor 16:2 On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.

Titus 3:10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,

H E MUST BE
ONE WHO
MANAGES HIS
OWN
HOUSEHOLD
WELL, (3X'S)

Manages:

"Manages": (I Timothy 3:4, 5, 12) 4291 proistemi (pro-is'-tay-mee); from 4253 and 2476; to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by implication) to practice: hence, "to lead, attend to" (indicating care and diligence), is translated "to rule" with reference to a family, <1 Tim. 3:4> KJV— maintain, be over, rule.

K EEPING HIS
CHILDREN
UNDER
CONTROL
WITH ALL
DIGNITY

Under Control

"Under Control": (I

Timothy 3:4) 5292 hupotage (hoop-ot-ag-ay'); from 5293; subordination: hupotage ^5292^, subjection (hupo, "under," tasso, "to order"), is translated "obedience" in <2 Cor. 9:13>, KJV— subjection.

Dignity

"Dignity": (I Timothy 3:4) 4587 semnotes (sem-not'-ace); from 4586; "venerableness, dignity"; it is a necessary characteristic of the life and conduct of Christians, <1 Tim. 2:2>, RV, "gravity" (KJV, "honesty"), a qualification of a bishop or overseer in a church, in regard to his children, <1 Tim. 3:4>; a necessary characteristic of the teaching imparted by a servant of God, <Titus 2:7> : KJV— gravity, honesty.

H AVING
CHILDREN
WHO
BELIEVE,

Believe

"Believe": (Titus 1:6) 4103 pistos (pis-tos); from 3982;) in the active sense means "believing, trusting"; It is translated "believer" in <2 Cor. 6:15>; "them that believe" in <1 Tim. 4:12>, RV (KJV, "believers "); in <1 Tim. 5:16>, "if any woman that believeth," lit. "if any believing woman." So in <6:2>, "believing masters." In <John 20:27> it is translated "believing." Titus 1:6>; KJV— believe (-ing, -r)

G OOD
MANAGERS OF
THEIR
CHILDREN

Managers

"Managers": (I Timothy 3:12) the same as above...