

 **Managing
GOD's Money**

Theme for the May: The Family

Despite persistent, vicious attacks on the traditional family by Governments and others in society, God's ordained roles for the family and family members apply today. Stand firm; don't let Governments' ill-conceived anti-traditional family policies deceive you. Always remember popular policies don't equate with morally acceptable policies. God's Word is the only authority for moral absolutes. This month, we will review God's Word to learn about the traditional family under these headings:

- May 1-7 - *The Husband: Servant Leader*
- May 8-14 - *The Wife: Partner and helper*
- May 15-21 - *The Parent and Child: Relationship building*
- May 22-31 - *The Family Council: Essential teaching and learning medium*



Topic for the Week: The Parent and Child - Relationship Building

May 15-21

The Word



Mark 10:14

When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

As Governments intrude in the family, many children have embraced the "rights" movement and become alienated from parents. Some sue their parents; others harm them, while others become disrespectful and either stay home in rebellion or flee to the streets.

Hurry-sickness has overwhelmed husbands and wives whom

the rat race has trapped, as they go nowhere fast. Often, a perceived need for more money to provide a "good life" for their families drives two parents to the workplace. Ironically, rather than reaching their goal to earn enough for this "good life," their combined incomes provide merely the base to amass huge debt, as they strive to "upgrade" and to acquire even "more." Stress results and family finances spiral out of control creating a perpetual state of turmoil in the family.

Sometimes to appease our children, or because *we are busy*, knowingly or unconsciously, we allow them to watch violent and, or sexually explicit TV programs, and, or play even more violent video games. So, they become desensitized to violence, rage, anger, and act out these behaviors, harming siblings, acquaintances, and friends.

How do we stop this madness and start to relate to our children according to God's best for them. I suggest we start by accepting children are gifts from God (Psalm 127:3), and not inconveniences we tolerate. After,

we need to slow down and start obeying God.

Children are valuable and need parental love and care. After all, parents are God's representatives in the home. We must show them the need for a personal relationship with Christ, and the imperative to depend on Him to supply all our needs.

We must model for them Jesus as our first priority, Lord of every area of our lives, and show awe, reverence for Him, and compassion. Psalm 103:13 reminds us:

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

Over the past two weeks, we portrayed husbands and wives' biblical roles. Dads and moms must model these roles so their children will see them as normal, and by God's grace copy them.

Proverbs 22:6 informs us "to train a child in the way he should go and when he grows old he will not turn from it." The best training is to model and reinforce desired behavior. Besides the husband and wife roles, parents

need to fulfill their parenting role in the home by devoting time to teaching the Word to their children regularly; not only as a family unit but one-on-one, moms with daughters and dads with sons. Moses told the children of Israel to teach their children continually the Word of God. Read and reflect on these verses in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

We are to teach and model God’s Word to our children regularly. Several years ago, my daughter, then ten-years old, told me I needed to do what I said—in other words, practice what I preached. Ouch! This has been one of my most important learning experiences to date.

Learning from my children didn’t end there. A few years later, my son presented me with another major memorable and humbling learning moment. At age eighteen he told me calmly and in love, “I wasn’t there for him.” I was preoccupied climbing the corporate ladder, believing I was doing great things for my family. What a lie executives on the rise accept! We believe we need to work unreasonable hours to provide for our families.

Today many men and a rising number of women, are self-focused,

obsessed with their jobs, and feel they are indispensable; they believe it’s all about them. I have been there! I see this plainly in hindsight; but before my son’s clear, piercing message, I didn’t listen when others told me to slow down and devote quantity time to my family.

After asking and getting my son’s forgiveness, I vowed never to place work or “stuff” before my family. Simultaneously, I placed God as my first priority, and asked and got my heavenly Father’s forgiveness immediately (1 John 1:9).

I will never be able to relive my son’s birthdays or ball games I missed. But God started a new relationship beyond my imagination. I beg you parents who are trapped in the hurriedness cycle to slow down. You will become “better” people, “better” parents, “better” workers, kinder, and more useful, when you get your priorities straight. It’s never too late to turn to Jesus to ask Him to direct your path.

The Bible describes well children’s roles. The Family Council that we will discuss next week is the forum to teach them. Meantime, we will look at the fifth commandment God gave Moses that deals specifically with an important part of this role: Exodus 20:12 commands as follows: *“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”*

Honoring our parents goes right to our attitude. It entails, respecting them, valuing their views and their individuality, holding them in high esteem, and obeying their requests that do not contravene the Word of God. These are essential traits in all human relationships and in our personal relationship with our heavenly Father. So much did God want children to value their parents that in Exodus 21:15, Moses commanded

that, *“Anyone who attacks his father or his mother must be put to death.”* Moses instituted a similar result for verbal abuse of parents in Leviticus 20:9. By His grace, Jesus Christ removed the need for such severe punishment, but children need to behave as indicated.

When children accept God’s ways, they will obey their parents. Ephesians 6:1-4 comments on both the children and father’s roles like this:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” — which is the first commandment with a promise — “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Children should do nothing against God’s laws, even if requested by parents. Note also, fathers shouldn’t annoy their children. The Living Bible describes verse 4 like this:

And now a word to you parents. Don’t keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice.

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, He showed His love for, and value of children. In Mark 10:14, He expressed “indignation” when the disciples were preventing the children from coming to Him. To be sure, He said the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them, as with those who are “poor in Spirit” (Matthew 5:3). To inherit God’s Kingdom each of us must become like little children, dependent on parents. Parents can learn much from this attitude.

Have you noticed? Jesus never refers to us as His adults (1 John 3:1,

7). Think about it! Parents must value their parents.

Application



1 Corinthians 11:8-12

For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman.

Parenting today is difficult, particularly for a single parent who must try to carry out mom and dad's roles. Children too, face challenges as many sources compete for their hearts and minds.

Parents, let's resolve by God's grace, to present our children to Christ daily, and to trust Him to guard and guide them as they make choices in the secular world

This week, mom and dad, reflect on your relationship with each of your children and answer these questions:

- I. Do I have regrets about my parenting role today?
 - a. If you do, ask God to show you how to modify your attitude and behaviour toward your children.

- b. If your children have grown-up with unresolved issues, ask God to show you how to deal with them. You might need a one-to-one with each of them under the Holy Spirit's direction.

same page — God's Word.

- V. Where do the children rate on my priority scale?
 - a. What would Jesus say about my answer?
- VI. Single parents, ask the Lord to bring godly adult influence of the opposite sex to you into your children's lives.

Memory Verse

Psalm 128:3

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive plants around your table.

- II. Am I investing time with each of my children individually and with the family unit, regularly?
 - a. If not, why not?
 - b. If you have teenage children, encourage each of them to go on regular dates with each parent?
- III. Are the communication channels with my children open?
 - a. Do they feel comfortable talking with me? Do I feel comfortable talking with them?
 - b. Am I *majoring on minors* and always lecturing them?
- IV. Are two parents on the same page with discipline, entertainment, responsibility, accountability, and other matters affecting the children?
 - a. Do they play one parent against the other?
 - b. If yes, ask the Lord to guide you to the

Considering this month's theme, *The Family*, this period's topic, *The Parent and Child: Relationship Building*, each day reflect on the specific verses in the *Daily Reflection* section below. These questions may help your reflection:

- Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
- How do these verses apply to me today?
- What lessons from these verses can I start to do today?

Notes

