

God's Wisdom in the Family Design

Class 1 – The Wisdom of the Marriage Relationship

There is a handout to accompany the classes, it is recommended everyone obtain a copy

We want to forget all we've heard,
learned or thought about marriage and raising children
as to the world's view of these –
our focus will be on God's view

God's wisdom:

His single, overarching spiritual objective
of the marriage relationship and family unit is
the salvation of everyone: the husband, wife and children

But to save them,
He must first *transform* them into new people

To the extent *we cooperate* with God's design
(regarding marriage and the family unit)
we can *receive* the blessings He intended

We need to differentiate between a

Godly marriage relationship
(built upon God's principles)

and a

human marriage relationship
(built upon man's wisdom)

The aim of a human marriage relationship is happiness

The *divine* aim of a godly marriage relationship
is not just happiness,
it's *salvation*

Getting the marriage relationship right
is key to getting the family right

If the marriage isn't established on a godly basis,
there's no way for the family to succeed spiritually

Marriage is a relationship we build one piece at time

If we stop building, it stops growing

It must be constantly renewed, refreshed & given new life

It can just as easily be torn down as it can be built up

There is nothing guaranteed,
apart from what the 2 people are willing to put into it

Two things are essential for true
marriage in the Lord –

total devotion of both people *to God*,

and total devotion *to each other*

all else is tragic failure

Why is God's Word so important in a marriage relationship?

Because it keeps the couple bound together in:

Love – (the love of Christ) including all its caring and affection

Respect – for 1 another, always treating each other with kindness

Appreciation – for the wonderful gift of your spouse from God – they are the most important gift God gives us alongside the Truth

A wise couple build their marriage
on the solid rock of God's principles

to withstand the storms of life that assail it

If I want to be a good spouse,
I must first be a good disciple

In other words,
I can't be a good/godly spouse
without first being a faithful disciple

The real enemy of a godly and happy marriage
is our human nature

God's wisdom:

Our marriage will repeatedly expose the ugliness of Sin

But our marriage is also the ideal place for our character failings to be exposed so:

they can be repudiated & the necessary changes made

What better person to hold me accountable to make needed changes; than
the one whom I love the most and who most loves me

God dearly wants to save our families

He has *specially designed* the marriage relationship
and the family unit to accomplish this

God created Adam/Eve within a marriage relationship
and family unit because He recognized
this was the best way to save all

Gen 2:18 – Left to himself, Adam would have been in
a “not good state” – lonely and incomplete

He needed someone to help him
fully develop his character

A “help, meet for him” is a helper, a companion, a
fellow disciple who **complements** him (an “e” not an “i”)
and *removes his “not good” state*

Adam would be *a better disciple* and be in
a better spiritual place having Eve’s close companionship

A wife should be a husband's
best and most intimate friend –
his closest companion

Because she will provide him with the best and most
helpful spiritual counsel and support of anyone in his life

God did not create husbands to be independent creatures...
without Eve, Adam was incomplete

A spiritual wife *counterbalances* the flesh-driven masculinity of her husband, and fills his spiritual, emotional & physical needs

Husbands: we don't ever want to squelch/ignore the person who was *specially selected* by God to help *transform and save us*

Gen 2 wasn't an exception, but *the model God uses* to bring a husband and wife together

The proof God is involved in selecting our spouse is
found in Jesus' words,

*“what therefore God has joined together,
let not man put asunder” (Matt 19:6)*

God doesn't just witness our vows,
He was actively involved in bringing us together

A moral implication:
*how dare anyone put asunder
a relationship God has joined together*

Our marriage and wife – she who has the single
greatest impact on our discipleship –
did not happen by chance

“a prudent wife is from the LORD”
Prov 19:14

Husbands – our wife is *God’s spiritual gift to us* –
not a gift like a birthday present, but a gift we need –
we must never forget this

The Divine principle of “**ONEness**”:
“...and they shall be *ONE* flesh” – Gen 2:24
“did not He make them *ONE*?” – Mal 2:15

God is looking for a couple to develop
a closeness and affinity for each other,
in which they see themselves

as ONE –

to see their relationship as special, unified, inseparable

God designed the marriage relationship
to be unique and
*to create a special **affinity** and **intimacy***
between the couple

A “Oneness” –

“and they shall be one flesh”

(See list of 10 proofs of the Oneness on pg 2 of the handout)

The wisdom of the Oneness:

There is spiritual strength & a power for good in being One

The stronger the level of Oneness,

the more spiritually helpful

both people can be for each other

A couple should take steps

to strengthen their Oneness

and avoid doing things that weaken it

Eph 5:23 – The husband is also to be “the savior”,
not in type, but in reality

Just as he is to:

“love his wife”

“sanctify and cleanse her”

“nourish and cherish her”

not in type, *but to actually do it*

She is to submit to him *“in everything”*

God specially designed the supreme pleasure
resulting from a couple's intimacy
to reinforce for them...

*...just how special He intends for their
relationship to be together*

It is intended to be the *culmination* of the
intimate spiritual, emotional and physical bond
that exists between them

They create a new life together out of their loving union
to *further cement* their special relationship

They then become jointly responsible
for the raising of that child whom *they* created,
requiring they work together

God designed and created the marriage relationship
to be patterned after
*the very special marriage relationship that exists
between His Son and his bride*

*No other relationship on earth has such
a high and holy model to follow*

The 10 proofs, each designed by God,
underscore the closeness,

the Oneness – “*the two shall become one*”

He intends to exist in their relationship

*God can bring 2 people together, but He cannot
control the level of Oneness they achieve –
that is left to each couple to determine*

A couple should *cherish* their special relationship
together above all other relationships

And be willing to nurture it, protect it, grow it and make
the personal contributions and sacrifices
worthy of such a special relationship

It is the foundation of the family unit

It's absolutely appropriate that the couple make a vow before God, to covenant themselves together

This relationship is so special & unique that they both promise to remain together till death or the Kingdom

The wisdom of the unbreakable covenant –

it's not punitive, it's designed to save both people

it's to prevent the flesh from convincing them they can walk away from each other

God's Wisdom in the Family Design

Class 2 – The (*God appointed*)
Roles and Responsibilities
of the Husband and Wife

Class 1: The wisdom of the marriage relationship

1. God's objective in marriage and the family unit is to save everyone; He uses both to transform us; to the extent we cooperate with His principles, we can receive the intended eternal blessings
2. The aim of a human marriage relationship (based on man's wisdom) is happiness; **the aim of a Godly marriage relationship is salvation** (so *don't be content with just happiness, **strive to help save each other***)
3. Getting the marriage relationship right is **key to getting the family unit right**
4. A marriage relationship is built one piece at a time; it must be constantly renewed and refreshed – there is nothing guaranteed ***apart from what both people are willing to put into it***
5. Marriage is ***total commitment and devotion*** to ① God, and to ② each other
6. If I want to be a good spouse, ***I must first be a good disciple***

Class 1: The wisdom of the marriage relationship

7. The real enemy of a godly marriage is our nature; yet *marriage is the ideal place for the weaknesses of both spouses (who love God, each other and are committed to one another's salvation) to be exposed so the needed changes can be made*
8. Adam without Eve was “not very good”; God provided a “helper”, a companion, a fellow disciple, as a gift (someone he needed) to fill a missing piece
 - *Our spouse is God's special gift to us* – we need to treat them as such; it's who we need based on our strengths/weaknesses; God is responsible for bringing us together (“*whom God has joined together...*”), to specifically address our respective character flaws
 - A wife should be a husband's *best and most intimate friend* because she will provide him with *the most helpful spiritual counsel and support of anyone in his life*
9. *The husband is to be “the savior”* – not in *type* but in reality, just as the wife is to submit to him “in everything”

Class 1: The wisdom of the marriage relationship

10. God designed the marriage relationship to be unique and to *create a special affinity/intimacy – a Oneness between the couple* (the 10 proofs)
- He seeks for a couple to develop *the highest possible level of Oneness* in their relationship
 - The stronger the Oneness, *the more spiritually helpful a couple can be to each other* (look for ways to strengthen it and avoid actions that weaken it)
 - God can bring 2 people together but He cannot control the level of Oneness they achieve – that is left to them to determine

The Oneness principle finds application in the big things and little things of our marriage relationship

If I belittle Diane at the ecclesia/in public when she makes a mistake or gleefully recall to others her past mistakes....

I am tearing down our Oneness

When God says I should do all I can to build it up

We can do positive things to help build our Oneness and we can remove negative things to also increase our Oneness

Class 1: The wisdom of the marriage relationship

11. A couple should **cherish** their special relationship together – **it is the foundation of the family unit**
12. The marriage relationship is of such importance that God has the couple enter **a lifelong covenant**; it is *not intended to be punitive*, but to keep the couple bound together, to overcome natural thoughts of separation when troubles arise

Eph 5 – the 3 parts of the marriage relationship

A spiritually happy and profitable marriage **begins** with **a husband's love for his wife**

1. The **spiritual** – vv23-28

- His wife's saviour, loving her with Christ's sacrificial love, sanctifying her, cleansing with the Word, presenting her to Christ ready for salvation

2. The **emotional** – vv29-30

- Nourishing and cherishing her with tenderness and loving affection, being in tune with each other and connected; a oneness (unity) of the highest possible level

3. The **physical** – v31

- A culmination of the spiritual & emotional; a celebration of the complete relationship

All 3 parts are equally important, but the spiritual is listed first as it is the foundation upon which the other 2 are built

Headship is *a responsibility* God assigns to the husband

God's definition of headship/leadership:

the responsibility to save

those over whom you have been made the head

*(priests, judges, kings, prophets, elders and Christ –
who was made the head of the race in order to save it)*

*Headship is not about power and authority;
it's about responsibility to save*

4x! Paul *commands* husbands to “love their wives” (Eph 5:26-33)
It's *not a natural love* husbands are born with;
it's a spiritual love that must be learned

A marriage can incur trouble in its infancy because
the early (romantic) love wanes

The romantic love alone won't sustain a marriage because
the flesh eventually overcomes romantic love

A new kind of love is needed – *salvation love*

The *romantic* love needs to *mature* to include the *salvation* love
An “*I will do everything necessary to save her*” love

The romantic love *is not replaced*, it's added to –
the Eph 5 love is *added to*
the Song of Solomon love

Paul makes this salvation love a command –
because it's a love that must be learned

Husbands, **God takes us to the cross** in Eph 5:25 and says,
“there is the love we must develop for our wife”

See God’s wisdom! It’s only when He teaches me to love as
Christ loved, *that He can save me*

He aligns my salvation with my responsibility to save my wife –
He uses our marriage relationship to teach me
how to love like His Son

Learning to love our wife with the love of Christ
will transform our marriage

A spiritual wife will *cherish* and *respond* to a husband
who devotes himself – out of love – to her salvation



*Wives: what can be more spiritually romantic than a
husband who devotes his life to saving yours?!*

This! is TRUE love

God's wisdom:

The commands to the husband to:

be the head

sanctify her

wash her in the Word

are purposely designed by God to benefit

both the husband and wife

A husband needs his wife's respect

*It's what he needs – not because he is qualified, but
because he is so unqualified*

*It enables him to keep going in fulfilling his responsibilities
as the head, especially when he's made mistakes*

As time moves on, the trials in a marriage can begin to wear down on the couple

We must never tire of forgiving our spouse

A marriage based upon immediate forgiveness will be altogether different from one that is not

1 Pet 3:7 – Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to (God's) knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Husbands, your wife has different needs than you do because God created her differently – be sensitive to her needs; not just because that's what she longs for – it's God's command!

“Giving honour” to her – *treat her as royalty* (2:17)

As “the weaker vessel” she is vulnerable in the relationship; don't take advantage of her vulnerability; do the exact opposite – *honour her – lift her up!*

“*that your prayers be not hindered*” – if we fail to care for our wife as commanded, **God won't listen to our prayers**

The trials of a marriage will reveal
the type of love

that exists in the marriage; either

Godly love – *a love that saves*

or

human love – *a transactional love that seeks benefits*

– “*if you do for me, I’ll do for you*”,
that fluctuates with circumstances

A marriage based on **Godly** love
is altogether different than one based on **human** love

A wife's God-assigned role and responsibilities
reflect her *unique* creation
and are *specifically designed*
to save her husband, her children and herself

Her focus is to be on her home (Titus 2:4-5)

Ephesians 5 – a wife is to:

- 1) submit to her husband (v22)
- 1) be subject to him...in everything (v24)
- 3) reverence/respect him (33)

A wife's God-assigned role and responsibilities
reflect her *unique* creation
and are *specifically designed*
to save her husband, her children and herself

4x Paul tells husbands to love their wives – 0x to wives!

Loving her husband is not the issue – submission is

Her submission *doesn't occur naturally* –
it's *a learned spiritual skill that must be learned*,
just as her husband must learn *to be Christ to her*

Her subjection is not dependent upon her husband's level of spirituality
(1 Pet 3:1), she is to be subject "*in everything*" (Eph 5:24)

The love she is to have for her husband is not a *natural* love,
it's *a spiritual love* – *a love that must be learned* (Titus 2:4)

No husband seeks to bear the responsibility
of being Christ to his wife –
it's a *daunting* responsibility

He's not to be a type of Christ to you, but *the reality*
this is God's expectation of him

Just as he is to:
"be the head"

"lay down his life for you"

"sanctify and wash you with the Word"

"prepare you to be presented to Christ, ready for salvation"

not in type, **but to actually do it**

Wives: how can you support your husband in this
daunting and mammoth responsibility?

*Be the helper “fit for him” (Gen 2:18) –
do ALL YOU CAN to help him be*

the best possible Christ to you that he can be

(especially when he makes mistakes)

We shouldn't expect God
to place responsibility upon the husband to lead
without also placing responsibility upon the wife to follow

See the wisdom of God in Eph 5!

Put both parts together – the roles of the husband and wife

God first turns to the husband and commands him
to be Christ to his wife – an incredible responsibility!

Then God turns to the wife and commands her to
do all she can to support him in fulfilling his responsibility!

She is to submit to the very man *who is responsible*
for her salvation!

*It's a marvelous arrangement – if both do their part,
both will be transformed and God can save them both*

God's Wisdom in the Family Design

Class 3 – The Wisdom of the Family Unit

Class 2 Review

1. Eph 5 identifies the 3 parts of a marriage relationship: the ***spiritual*** (listed first because it is the foundation), the ***emotional*** and the ***physical***
2. A spiritually happy and profitable marriage ***begins with a husband's love for his wife***
3. Headship is not about power and authority, it's about ***responsibility to save***; as the head the husband has a responsibility to save his wife
4. 4 times Paul commands husbands to “love their wives” in Eph 5 – it is not a natural love husbands are born with but ***a spiritual love that must be learned***
5. The *romantic* love that forms during courtship won't sustain a marriage – the flesh eventually overcomes such love; a new kind of love is needed - ***salvation love***; the romantic love is not replaced, *the love of Eph 5 is added to the Song of Sol love*

Class 2 Review

6. God takes husbands to the cross in Eph 5 – there is the love we must develop for our wife; in His wisdom, God aligns the husband's responsibility to save his wife with his own salvation, *using marriage to teach the husband how to love with Christ's love* (a prerequisite for the husband's salvation)
7. A spiritual wife will cherish and respond to a husband who devotes himself – out of love – to her salvation; *this is true love*
8. In God's wisdom, He commands the husband to be the head, to sanctify his wife and to wash her with the word – all of which are designed *to benefit both the husband and wife*
9. *We must never tire of forgiving our spouse*
10. We can either let the myriad of mistakes that typically occur between a husband and wife, ruin our relationship, or we can *learn to forgive and use the failings to build each other up*

Class 2 Review

11. Peter (1 Pet 3) echoes Paul's counsel – a husband is **to learn and be sensitive to**, his wife's needs, to **treat her as a queen** and honour her in light of her **vulnerability** in the relationship; *if he mistreats her, God stops hearing his prayers*
12. A husband and wife should view their relationship as being “*joint heirs together of the grace of life*” – not just to just get along, ***but to help save each other***
13. **The trials of a marriage reveal the type of love that exists** – either **Godly** love – a love that saves, or **human** love, a transactional love that seeks benefits
14. As the head, the husband has *a daunting responsibility* to be Christ to his wife and bears responsibility for her salvation
 - The wife's role, in light of his responsibility to her, is to be “a helper fit for him” (Gen 2:18) – ***to help him to be the best possible Christ to her that he can be***

Class 2 Review

15. *A husband needs his wife's respect, especially when he fails;* this enables him to keep going in fulfilling his responsibility as the head and devotion to her salvation
16. In His wisdom, God commands the wife to submit to the very man who *bears responsibility for her salvation;* while the world may scoff at and reject the principle of submission, this God-appointed relationship is designed to save her

A wife's God-assigned role and responsibilities
reflect her *unique* creation
and are *specifically designed*
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Her submission *doesn't occur naturally* –
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Her subjection is not dependent upon her husband's level of spirituality
(1 Pet 3:1), she is to be subject "*in everything*" (Eph 5:24)

The love she is to have for her husband is not a *natural* love,
it's *a spiritual love* – *a love that must be learned* (Titus 2:4)

God doesn't ask a wife to place her faith in her husband;
she is to submit to him,
but her faith remains in God

.. Eph 5:22 – "...submit yourselves unto your own husbands, **as unto the Lord.**"
1 Pet 3:5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women **who trusted in God**,
adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

The spiritual wife finds motivation and power to obey
her husband, not because he *deserves* it or is *worthy*,
but because of her love for God

If there is abuse of any kind: mental, emotional or physical,
the principle of submission is **superseded** by other principles
regarding safety and the wife's spiritual well being

A special appeal to young people who are in a courting relationship (*or considering one*)

Very early in the relationship

- The marriage principles and respective responsibilities of the man and woman in Eph 5 should quickly find application in the relationship (*a couple shouldn't wait until the wedding day to uphold the spiritual and emotional responsibilities*)
- The young woman should determine early on (***even before the relationship begins***) if the young man will have her spiritual well-being at heart (or *his own self interests*)
- Early on the young man should determine if she seeks to be *washed in the Word* and remain *sanctified* (holy), separate from the evil of the world so she can be prepared and ready for salvation at Christ's return

A special appeal to young people who are in a courting relationship (*or considering one*)

If the relationship becomes “serious” (but **before** an engagement)

- ✓ Both parents should cover the responsibilities of the husband and wife in Eph 5 with their respective son or daughter
 - The young man needs to know his, and his girlfriend’s responsibilities
 - The young woman likewise needs to know her, and her boyfriend’s responsibilities
- ✓ Key questions for the son: is she a ***spiritually minded*** woman:
 - 1) for whom you want to be ***responsible to save?***
 - 2) whom you want to be ***the mother of your children?***
- ✓ Key questions for the daughter: is he a ***spiritually minded*** man whom:
 - 1) you want to be ***responsible for your salvation?***
 - 2) you are willing ***to be subject to “in everything?”***

The Wisdom of the Family Unit

God has designed family life with a mother and father who both

① love and fear God, and ② love each other
and are ③ committed to each other's salvation

Into that *highly favourable home* for a godly seed to be raised,
God places His children

*It's the **ideal environment** to raise children who are to learn God's ways*

*Everyone is encouraged unto righteousness,
and is encouraged to encourage each other unto righteousness*

The family unit is God's invention, not man's

We need to be cautious when consulting books
outside the Bible
in seeking counsel on raising children

The family unit is the ideal place for the character flaws of our
children to be revealed

We shouldn't treat their mistakes and failings as a tragedy –
God intends for *those failings to be exposed* so they can learn
about sin and confession and repentance and forgiveness

The family unit is God's invention, not man's

In God's wisdom, the family unit is also the ideal place for the flaws and failings of the parents to be exposed

The family unit is the ideal place for the character flaws of our children to be revealed

We shouldn't treat their mistakes and failings as a tragedy – God intends for *those failings to be exposed* so they can learn about sin and confession and repentance and forgiveness

Parents make lots of mistakes

God chose us as parents, to raise His children,
whom He placed in our family

God doesn't need perfect parents
to raise His children,

He needs devoted parents

who are committed to:

- ① living by His righteous ways themselves and
- ② raise His children by them

We are a Kingdom heading family

Make yours a Kingdom heading family – It's a simple yet powerful concept even the young can grasp and explains why your family maintains its godly standards, regardless of what other families may be doing



The direction God is heading should be the
direction our family is heading...

so all the family members can be part of that future

*God typically gives us about 18 years to teach and
prepare our children for Him to become their Father*

A fundamental overarching principle to parenting:

*If I want to raise a Godly seed,
then I must be living a Godly life*

As parents, the absolute *best* thing we can do for our kids is
to be living the Truth ourselves

The Truth becomes *alive for them*

In God's wisdom, our children provide a
*motivation for right conduct and
a restraint from wrong conduct –
for us – the parents*

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*If I want to raise a Godly seed,
then I must be living a Godly life*

As parents, the absolute *best* thing we can do for our kids is
to be living the Truth ourselves

The Truth becomes *alive* for them

*It is spiritual abuse of our children
to verbally promote the Kingdom to them,
but then not genuinely live for it*

Our children are growing up
in a spiritually confusing world that rejects God's ways

They need to see 2 things clearly:

1) what God's Truth is; and

2) that Mom and Dad are
sincerely and genuinely committed
to living God's Truth

*Confusing and mixed signals by parents cause children
living in the last days to lose their garments (Rev 16:15)*

“Parents in the Truth have only one life: the spiritual, which enters and shapens every aspect of daily living. This kind of living has a tremendous influence on growing children: to them deeds are far more powerful than words. Children who grow up in a family where attendance at ecclesial meetings is as habitual as the daily meals, become accustomed to loyalty to the ecclesia as a way of life. If, as soon as they are able to read, they take part in the daily readings, they are absorbing a habit which will not be easily broken. If they see parents showing unswerving affection and devotion to ecclesial members, especially the lonely and the aged, they are likely to carry into their lives that care and affection for others long after they themselves have left the family circle. These things are not “preached” to the children: they are lived out in the lives of the parents.”

John Marshall, The Christadelphian, 1965, pg 199

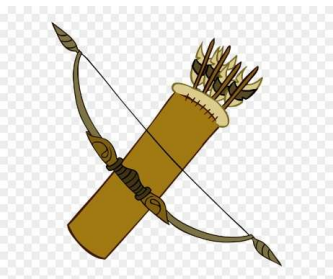
Psalm 127 – Our family is God's family and our children *are God's children*

V1: it's God who builds the family and it's His family He is building

The warning: unless God's principles are used to build the family,
the building will be *in vain* and *no real family will be built*

V3 – our children did not originate with us;
we did not create them apart from God's involvement;
they are His gift and reward to us

There's a moral implication to raising God's children:
*we need to use His standards, His preferences,
His aspirations (not our own), for what
He is aiming to achieve in their life*



Psalm 127:4

*“As arrows are in the hand of a might man;
so are children of the youth”*



Our primary objective as parents should be to
raise our children to understand and love God's ways...

So that when they are older,
they will seek after and embrace Him –
the very reason He brought them into the world –
to be their Father

God's Wisdom in the Family Design

Class 4 –

A Mother's Unique Role and Responsibilities

Class 3 Review

1. Into the lives of two people who love God and each other, and are committed to each other's salvation, God places His children – it's **the ideal environment** for the children to learn to love Him and embrace His future for them
 - Everyone is encouraged unto righteousness and is encouraged to encourage each other unto righteousness
2. In God's wisdom, the family unit is also the ideal place for the flaws and failings **of the parents** to be exposed
3. A child begins life with a sin prone nature but also with **2 parents devoted to teaching him/her how to learn to overcome it** – exactly what the child needs
4. The family unit is also **the ideal place** for the character flaws of our children to be revealed – *the flaws are not a tragedy*, it's what God intends **so these can be dealt with properly** and the children can learn how to hold themselves accountable to right living, and about sin, confession, repentance and forgiveness

Class 3 Review

5. Parents make lots of mistakes, but God doesn't need **perfect** parents to raise His children, He needs **devoted** parents – who are ① committed to living by His ways themselves and ② to raise His children by them
 - Our children. growing up in a confusing, God-rejecting world, must see 2 things:
 - ① God's Truth; and ② that ***Mom and Dad devote themselves to living it***
6. Make yours **a Kingdom heading family** – it's a simple concept even the young can grasp and explains (especially to teens) the family's godly standards and right living, regardless of what other families may be doing or the direction they may be going
7. An overarching principle for parenting: ***if I want to raise a Godly seed, then I must be living a Godly life***; the best thing we can do for our children is to live the Truth ourselves; if this piece is missing, *it creates insurmountable confusion for them*
8. In God's wisdom, our children provide a motivation for *right conduct* and a restraint from *wrong conduct* – **for us – the parents**

Class 3 Review

9. It is *spiritual abuse* of our children to be teaching them the Truth, but then not living it ourselves
10. Our children **are God's children** (Ps 127) – who are given to us as His gift & reward
 - It is God who builds the family for it is His family He is building
 - Unless His principles are used to build, *the family is built in vain*
11. There is **a moral implication** to raising God's children – we need to use His standards, preferences and aspirations (*not our own*) for what He is aiming to achieve in our children's lives
 - They are not given to us to excel in music, academics or sport, but to be *the best possible children of God* they can be
12. God uses the metaphor of arrows to describe parenting – our primary objective as parents is to aim our children (*they can't aim themselves*) in the right direction – so they grow up to understand, love and embrace God's ways – **the very reason He brought them into the world – to be their Father**

A special appeal to gr/parents & ecclesial aunties and uncles

- ✓ The extended ecclesial family can be very helpful to parents raising a godly seed
- ✓ As the world's morals decline, parents need more help to counter the evil influences in their teen's lives; be willing to take the time to develop meaningful relationships with your ecclesial teens ***to share with them your struggles and how you have learned to overcome the world*** – it's not a skill with which they were born
- ✓ Your life experiences provide insight and validation to God's Word and how He works in the life of a disciple to save them
- ✓ Be willing to share your significant spiritual life experiences and the lessons learned (*sometimes the 'hard way'*)

When we share our life stories with the young people, it helps bring God's principles to life, and it helps them see that we are all struggling under the burden of the flesh, and we all need to take our counsel and direction from the Word

The Blessing of Conception is under God's control and guidance

Our children are not the result of time and chance

Our children are born at the right time, in the right family, to the right parents,
to be aimed in the right direction

- ✓ God has known them by name before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4)
- ✓ He foreknew them and has predestinated (marked out in advance) to be conformed to the image of His Son, and called them to one day be glorified (Rom 8:29-30)
- ✓ We should never refer to any of our children as a “*mistake*” – Scripture describes them as a ***blessing***, an ***inheritance***, a ***reward***, a ***gift***

Jer 1:5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

- *God “forms” our children in the belly (at conception)*
- *He sanctifies (separates) them for His purpose before birth*
- *Jeremiah was not an exception but a reflection of God's involvement in the formation of His children*

God hates sexual immorality of any kind (fornication, adultery, homosexuality) and divorce, because these *destroy the marriage relationship and family unit...*

*the very relationships God designed
and through which
He is working to save His children*

“Man’s greatest weakness in this respect is *his utter vulnerability to women*. Therefore, every man should look inwards to his own marriage, create every circumstance to foster its well-being and **avoid every place, person or condition which presents a temptation.**”

Bro Harry Tennant

Mothers play a special role in raising their children

God elevates motherhood and highly values their critical role

“It is impossible to overestimate the importance (of the mother’s influence on her children)...the ability to instruct through the everyday pattern of daily life is a mother’s highest quality...From the mother’s example, good or evil, children learn the rudiments (basic principles) of life. The mother who redeems the time, sees in all parts of her activities the need to honour the name of God, has the happy disposition of one who leaves the affairs of an unknown future in the hands of her God and concentrates instead on today and how she can please Him, will communicate this devotion to her children.”

Swanwick Family Gathering 1986

Mothers play a special role in raising their children

God elevates motherhood and highly values their critical role

We need to put the pieces together and connect the dots

God created man and women with unique qualities –
when it came time to ascribe who would have the greatest influence over
the children in the early years – *the formative years* –

He sent the father into the field to work
and instructed the mother to stay home
and take care of His children –

because of the unique qualities He gave her at Creation

Mothers play a special role in raising their children

Deut 6:6-9 – The ways of God should be our way of life

- 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:
- 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
- 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.
- 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Mothers play a special role in raising their children

- These verses describe not only the need for the children to hear the Bible read, but also to **see its principles being lived**
- God's word should be found in ***all that is done*** in the home
- Mothers have ***ample opportunity*** to teach God's way of living, she must be sound spiritually to establish a God-centred home environment
- It's mum who has a major impact on her young children's spiritual development simply by ***how she operates her household***
- She has ***a unique role in fulfilling Ps 127:*** to ensure their arrow is pointed in the right direction – *toward the Kingdom*

Mothers play a special role in raising their children

- ✓ God created moms with a special sensitivity to discern what is spiritually **helpful** or **destructive** for her children
- ✓ Her maternal instincts are not limited to the *physical* aspects of life but apply equally to **things spiritual**
- ✓ She needs to be willing to share these insights with her husband, who himself needs to be receptive to her special discernments
- ✓ The single most important aspect for a mother raising children is *to be faithful herself* – her positive godly influence is **spiritual gold** for her children

Who is saving whom?

Is Mum saving her child?

Or is the child saving their Mum?

In God's Wisdom

they are both helping to save each other

A Mum's primary responsibility is to nurture her children

We must not let the world undermine for our young mothers the valuable role they play in raising their children

Titus 2:4 – That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, **to love their children**, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands.

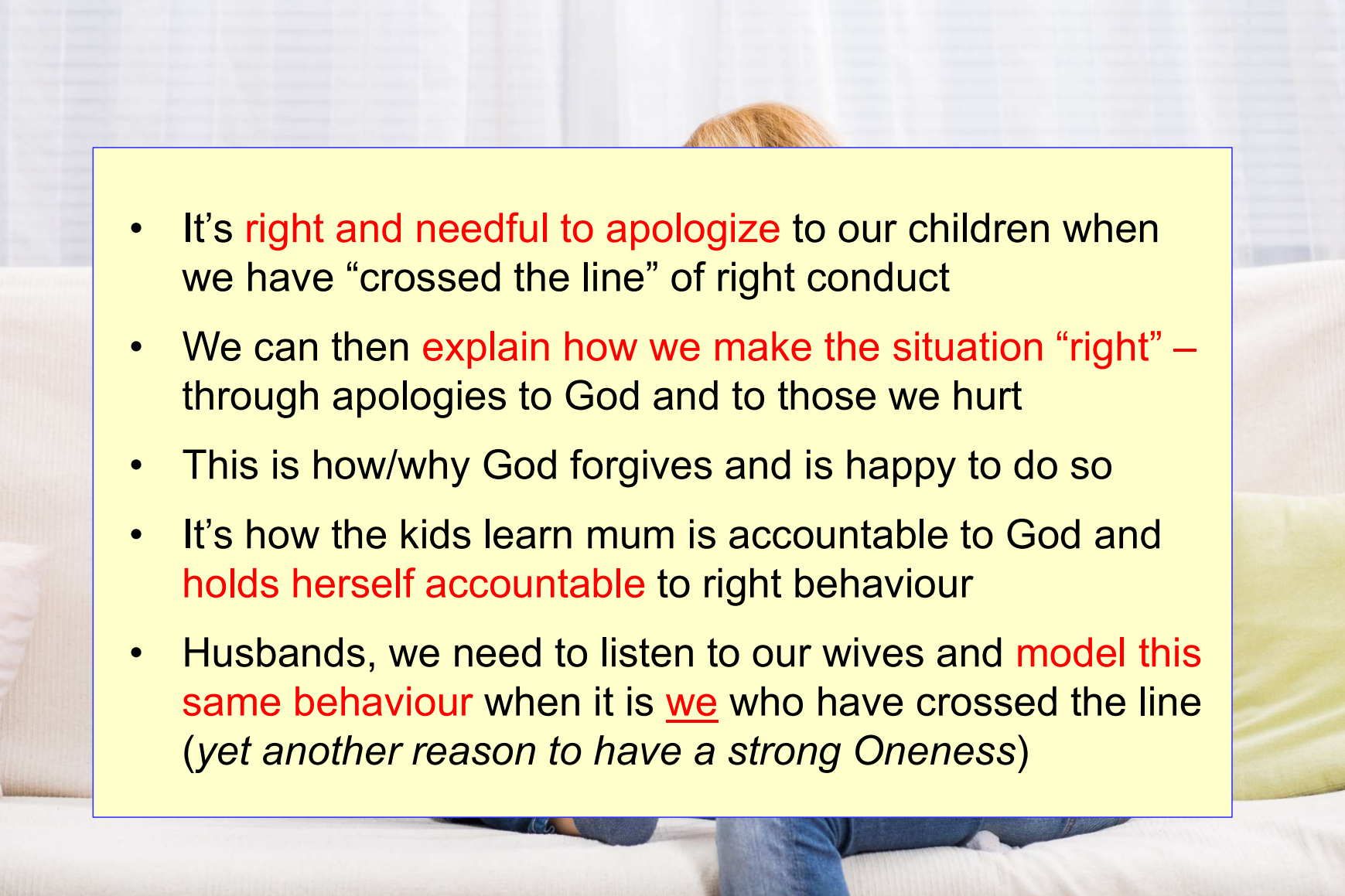
1 Tim 5:14 – I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, **guide the house**, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

1 Tim 2:15 – Notwithstanding **she shall be saved in childbearing** (*rearing and nurturing children of faith*), if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety (modesty).

Prov 31:27 – **She looketh well to the ways of her household**, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.





- 
- It's **right and needful to apologize** to our children when we have “crossed the line” of right conduct
 - We can then **explain how we make the situation “right”** – through apologies to God and to those we hurt
 - This is how/why God forgives and is happy to do so
 - It's how the kids learn mum is accountable to God and **holds herself accountable** to right behaviour
 - Husbands, we need to listen to our wives and **model this same behaviour** when it is **we** who have crossed the line (*yet another reason to have a strong Oneness*)

“A mother’s ability to create a home is priceless. No other person within the family has the privilege of spending so much time in building the very framework in which all other members live together. *We live in an age when home-building has been replaced for many women by self-fulfillment in careers and other activities away from home.* There are profound dangers here for all of the family. It may be that economic factors or illness of one’s partner make this necessary. It can be that we choose this other way of life for other reasons. We read that “even Christ pleased not himself” (Rom. 15:3). All of us assume responsibilities when we marry: the husband to provide and the wife to “do him good and not evil all the days of her life” *and to look well “to the ways of her household”* (Prov. 31:12, 27). These are our prime activities.”

Harry Tennant, Swanwick Family Gathering 1986

God makes the 'rules' in our house (not Mum/Dad)

*The 'rules' all tie to God's ways, not parents' whims;
Mom and Dad live by the same rules as the children*

1. This elevates the Bible as the highest family authority – the children learn to value and respect it
2. God/Christ is the head of this house, not Mum or Dad
3. The Bible defines right/wrong for the family
4. Mum and Dad's 'rules' all tie to the Kingdom – a future reward
5. The children learn to link their actions to Bible teachings
6. When teens challenge the house 'rules', they'll see that they are challenging God, not just Mum and Dad
7. Later in life, when they transition to God becoming their Father, they will have learned how to use the Bible **to set their own 'rules'** for right conduct

OUR HOUSE RULES

May, 1995

1. We will read the Bible every day.
2. We will always speak and act kindly to one another.
3. We will treat each other with respect at all times.
4. We will not provoke one another under any circumstances.
5. We will use no physical force against each other.
6. We will not use the property of another without first obtaining permission.
7. We will not be selfish but will share what we have with others.
8. We will complete all homework.
9. We will not lie to one another.
10. We will clean up after ourselves and our company.
11. Everyone will have a say in what we decide to do.
12. We will not bout.

mom calls you. **OUR HOUSE RULES**

- May, 1995
21. Don't fight over the phone
17. Don't use the phone for a long time
23. We will not stick tongues out at people
20. Don't eat with your mouth open.
22. ★ Don't do anything bad.
16. Put foot rest in when you're done with the loveseat
15. We will have no discussions
13. Do Not walk away when others are talking to you
1. We will read the Bible every day.
 2. We will always speak and act kindly to one another.
 3. We will treat each other with respect at all times.
 4. We will not provoke one another under any circumstances.
 5. We will use no physical force against each other.
 6. We will not use the property of another without first obtaining permission.
 7. We will not be selfish but will share what we have with others.
 8. We will complete all homework.
 9. We will not lie to one another.
 10. We will clean up after ourselves and our company.
 11. Everyone will have a say in what we decide to do.
 12. We will not pout.

Subsequent Additions:

- 13) Do not walk away when others are talking to you
- 14) We will not mumble, gripe or complain, WHINE
- 15) We will have no discussions
- 16) Put the foot-rester in when you're done with the loveseat
- 17) Don't use the phone for a long time or (#21) fight over it
- 18) Please come to the table when mom calls you to eat
- 19) Don't eat with your mouth full; (#20) don't eat with your mouth open
- 22) Don't do anything bad
- 23) We will not stick tongues out at people

God's Wisdom in the Family Design

Step back and see the big picture

- ✓ God gives us the *command* that we learn to live like Him
- ✓ He then gives us *children*, as parents, with the command that we teach them to learn to live like Him, like His character
 - As children, *the foremost example* they will follow is us
 - They don't follow what we say, but what they see us do
- ✓ See God's wisdom? For us to be able to teach our children to live like His character, *we must be living it ourselves*
- ✓ Our children become added motivation, provided by God, *for us to live like Him*

Who is saving whom?

Remember this the next time you may lament how much hard work it takes (*which it does*) to raise godly children – ***God is saving you in the process***

God's Wisdom in the Family Design

Class 5 –

Faithful Parenting

Class 4 review

1. **Conception is under God's control** (not solely by our own strength/timing) – our children are born at the right *time*, in the right *family*, to the right *parents*, to be aimed in the right *direction*
2. When it came time to ascribe who would have the greatest influence over the children in the early years – *the formative years* – God sent the father into the field to work and instructed the mother to stay home – **because of the unique qualities she was created with** – to care for His children
3. **Mothers play a special role** to ensure their children's arrows are pointed in the right direction – which God highly values; no outside career, regardless of its success, can compare to this lofty spiritual responsibility, though society disesteems it
4. God created moms with **a special sensitivity** to what is spiritually helpful or harmful for her children; fathers: *we need to be receptive to their God-given insights*

Class 4 review

5. The single most important aspect for a mother raising children *is to be faithful herself* – her steady positive godly influence is *spiritual gold* for her children
6. Who is saving whom? Is the mum saving the child or is the child saving the mum? In God's wisdom *they are both helping to save each other*
7. *Parents should acknowledge their mistakes to their children*; it models how to properly deal with sin – confession, repentance and God's forgiveness; and that parents hold themselves accountable to right behaviour
8. God hates sexual sins of any kind (fornication, adultery, homosexuality) and divorce, because *these destroy the marriage and family relationships* He designed and uses to save His children

Class 4 review

9. Teach the children about God's supremacy by explaining that He (not Mum/Dad) makes the 'rules' (the principles we live by) in our house, for all to obey and that these are not based on parental whims
- This elevates God's Word placing it at the family's centre and **will ultimately teach the children** how to use divine principles to evaluate their own actions
 - As parents, we cannot make up 'rules'; they must *tie back to the Bible* and *point forward to the Kingdom*
 - Children need 'rules' (principles) and clearly defined boundaries of right/wrong; *when parents are inconsistent, the line defining righteousness moves, leaving the children confused*

Question #1 – True/False: You must have been raised in the Truth to be godly parents (parents who are raising a godly seed according to the principles we are studying this week)

Question #2 – True/False: You have to be good disciples to be godly parents

You don't have to be raised in the Truth to be godly parents; but you do have to be devoted parents (to God)

Honour thy father and thy mother

God assigns to parents the *lofty position* as His ambassadors,
then commands the children to obey them
(and God's ways the parents represent)

In God's wisdom He tells the parents, “*you need to teach, model
and live My ways to your children*”

He then tells the children
“*you must honour your parents and obey them*”

The children are to learn God's ways not the parents'

Honour thy father and thy mother

If the children are permitted to disrespect or disregard their parents, *it destroys the family unit* and its objective to save them

While God gives the command to the children
(for them to obey it),
*He places primary responsibility for it to be obeyed
upon the parents!*

Honour thy father and thy mother

We can't force our children to honour us

God doesn't force a person to obey Him –
we can't violate His character
in trying to *fulfill His commandment*

The commandment has to be a thing
the children learn to obey
lovingly and willingly

The wisdom of the commandment

In the commandment, Gods says:
to the children: “*honour your parents*”
to the parents, God says:

“Live in a way that befits such honouring!”

This commandment is directed
as much to the parents as it is to the children

God’s wisdom: who is saving whom?

Parenting is to be done by faith
We must (by faith) use God's principles

Just as we don't invent our own principles regarding
forgiveness, preaching, helping widows/poor or
shepherding the ecclesia,

neither should we
invent our own way of parenting

(if we use man's principles, we glorify man, not God)

Parenting is hard work

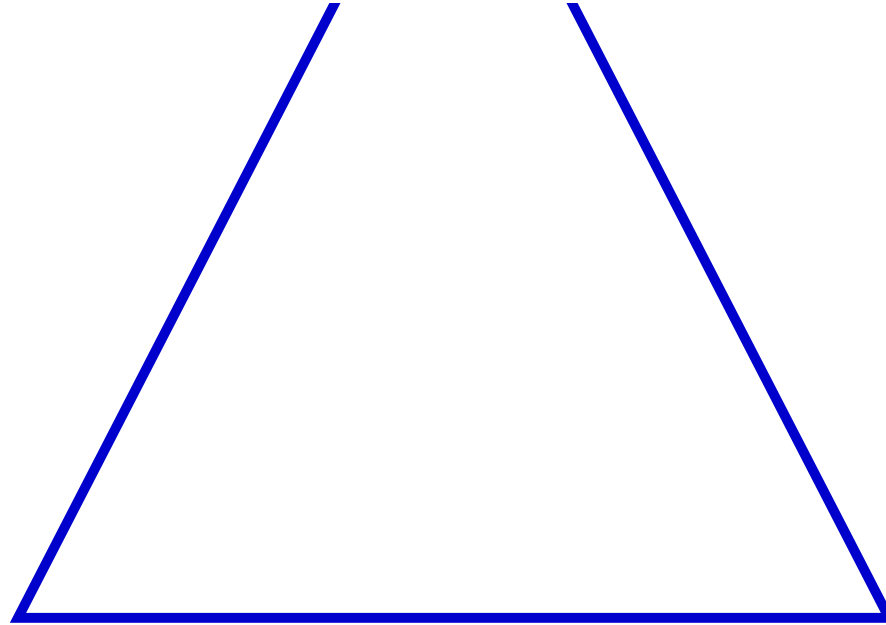
When the kids are young, it requires great *physical* effort;
when they are teens – there is more *mental* effort

Parenting will wear us out,
but what other aspect of discipleship, if done properly –
with all our heart, soul, strength and might –
doesn't also wear us out – in a good way

① PERSONAL COMMITMENT
(by the child/teen) to spiritual growth



3 requirements for the spiritual growth
of children and teens



② BIBLE CENTRED

③ REVERENTIAL FUN

PERSONAL COMMITMENT
(by the child/teen) to spiritual growth

As parents, the goal of our massive education program is to **make the Bible come alive** for our children

There's moral power for good God has placed in His Word that we need to teach our children **how to access for themselves**

When all 3
are present

**Spiritual
learning
& growth occurs**

BIBLE CENTRED

REVERENTIAL **FUN**

Godly discipline begins with love – to save

- Discipline done without love is *punishment*
- If our child doesn't believe **we truly love them** when we discipline them to forsake wrong behavior, then our discipline adds *confusion* for them, not *clarity*
- **We can successfully discipline our child to the extent they know we love them**
- Discipline should never be administered out of anger, spite, when we're tired, or having a bad day
- If it is not being done **by love, for their salvation**, then it's *not the right time* to discipline

God expects us to discipline our children

Proverbs

13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

22:15 Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but the rod of correction* shall drive it far from him.

23:13-14 Withhold not correction from the child: *for if thou beatest him with the rod*, he shall not die. *Thou shalt beat him with the rod*, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

29:15 *The rod and reproof give wisdom*: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

29:17 *Correct thy son*, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

God expects us to discipline our children

- ✓ The rod is not a tool of *punishment* but a tool of salvation
- ✓ If our use of the rod teaches our children to resent us or God's principles, *we use it in a way God never intended*
- ✓ God knows the strength of the flesh – even in a young child – *a disobedient child left undisciplined will not return to righteousness all by himself*
- ✓ The flesh cannot be transformed without the use of discipline, *an undisciplined child will not return to right conduct on their own*
- ✓ The world doesn't see value in the rod because they are not trying to transform the character of their children from walking after the flesh to walking after the spirit

We need to get the discipline piece right

Godly discipline leads to righteousness – Heb 12:11

Eph 6:4 – the danger of provoking to anger

4 ...fathers, provoke (*grk: enrage, cause to anger*) not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture (*educate*) and admonition (*mild rebuke, exhortation*) of the Lord. (*Consistent with God's ways*)

Col 3:21 – the danger of breaking their spirit

21 Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger* (9999), lest they be discouraged (*spiritless, disheartened*).

Paul places responsibility for how the child responds to the discipline ***squarely on the shoulders of the father***, not on the shoulders of the child

Faithful parenting - Jacob

- ✓ Jacob provides hope, comfort and encouragement for all parents whose children have either never embraced the Truth or who have lost their way and walked away from it
- ✓ There's a lengthy period of his life – 22 years – in which he lived with severe disappointment over the failing level of spirituality of 10 of his 12 sons
- ✓ His sons were supposed to become heads of Israel and be part of the promises to their great grandfather Abraham; but were heading in the wrong direction
- ✓ Jacob *remains faithful to God despite his sons' failings*; *sometimes this is all we can do as parents and grandparents*
- ✓ In the end, all 12 were true believers and will be in the Kingdom, in large part because of Jacob's consistent and enduring faithfulness during the long heartbreaking years

Faithful parenting - Mordecai

- ✓ He taught his daughter to evaluate life situations *using a spiritual perspective to make right decisions*, even at great personal risk
- ✓ She had learned key life principles: ① Honour your parents; ② God **redeems** us from evil, He doesn't **insulate** us from it; ③ He uses trials to increase our faith; and ④ Godly love is defined as **laying down your life to save those you love**
- ✓ He had taught her *how to walk by faith* – trust God and do the right thing and leave the situation for Him to bless as He sees fit
- ✓ Mordecai had a loving relationship with her; **she never doubted his love, even when he asked her to lay down her life for her people**
- ✓ They were **a Kingdom heading family** – his counsel: “live for the future Kingdom, not for this present life”

Faithful parenting – Jonadab (Jer 35)

- ✓ Jonadab saw the apostasy of Jezebel and made a vow of separation and dedication for himself and his family
- ✓ He rightly concluded the family needed to make life changes to avoid being swallowed up by the evil of their day
- ✓ He recognized the need to introduce new and more restrictive standards (than prior generations needed) to counteract and overcome the new and more evil enticements arising in his day
- ✓ He introduced 7 new standards (vv6-7), each designed to **preserve holiness** and to **protect the family** from Jezebel's apostasy
- ✓ These were to be taught to his family and all future family generations (Jer 35:6 – “nor your sons, forever”)

Faithful parenting – Jonadab (Jer 35)

- He was a faithful father who took a stand for righteousness against the evil of his day (2Kg10) – 240 years later the family is **still honouring** that stand and still standing against the evil!
- This is what spiritual leadership looks like! – taking steps to save your family when you witness an explosion of evil in the world around you!
- It's a marvelous vindication of God's principles regarding parenting and the positive spiritual impact they have on children (eg. *there must have been a massive education program for each new generation within the family*)
- It's possible to teach children God's ways, who grow up to teach their children, who then teach their children...(Ps 78:6)

Jonadab's message to us:

*be willing and prepared to **change the way we live** because of the evil we now live in*

Faithful parenting – Jonadab (Jer 35)

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Separate from the world (not from the ecclesia)

Jonadab's message to us:

*be willing and prepared to **change the way we live** because of the evil we now live in*

Abraham: a faithful parent, known to God`

6680: to charge to obey – cp 2:16

Gen 18:19 For I know him, that he will ① command his children and his household after him, and ② they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment (so) that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Same 2 Heb words

Jeremiah 23: Christ as King in the Kingdom

- 5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign & prosper, & shall execute judgment & justice in the earth.
- 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell saely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

God knew Abraham would teach his children to live righteously and to reflect
the very same character
that will be the hallmark traits of Christ when he is King of the earth

Abraham: a faithful parent, known to God`

Gen 18:19 For I know him, that he will ①command his children and his household after him, and ②they shall keep the way of the LORD to do justice and judgment; (so) that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

- ✓ v19: It's not Abraham who'd keep God's way, but his children
- ✓ The only way his family could keep God's way would be for Abraham to have first taught them to do so – he had a *massive education program* in his household
- ✓ God knew Abraham's children would know and live the Truth
- ✓ He taught them to know and obey God, not himself

God knew Abraham would teach his children to live righteously and to reflect the very same character that will be the hallmark traits of Christ when he is King of the earth

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Abraham's motivation

- Abraham wanted his children to be part of God's future
- What God had "spoken to Abraham about" was that future in which his single seed would reign as king and his multitudinous seed would inherit the land forever
- **They were a Kingdom heading family!**
- A sizeable portion of that believing family ends up in the "east" in the book of Job (Gen 25:1-5)

Abraham: a faithful parent, known to God`

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Abraham's motivation

V19 is a simple yet powerful banner for parenting

What do we do? we command our children to “keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment” – the same righteous principles Christ will teach the world when he is King

How do we do it? by ① *a massive and repetitive educational process in our home and*
② *by setting the right example ourselves*

Why do we do it? For the same reason Abraham did – so our children can be part of God's glorious future

Abraham: a faithful parent, known to God`

Gen 18:19 For I know him, that he will ①command his children and his household after him, and ②they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; (so) that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

20+ years later Gen 22 occurs: *[the evidence for this is in the handout]*

Gen 22:7-8 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

The multiple connections God records between Abraham offering his son, and God offering His Son, are only meaningful if the lamb of Gen 22 is willing, knowledgeable and cooperative

Abraham: a faithful parent, known to God`

Gen 18:19 For I know him, that he will ①command his children and his household after him, and ②they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; (so) that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

The events of Gen 22 reveal how Isaac HAD BEEN RAISED:

- ✓ Abraham had taught Isaac to trust God and to love and obey Him, even in the face of perplexing situations
- ✓ Isaac had embraced his father's life-saving principles
- ✓ Abraham and Sarah had aimed and shot Isaac as an arrow (Ps 127) in the direction of those things that are eternal

The events of ch 22 validate God's declaration in ch 18!

Abraham had done the very thing God said he would do:

to teach his children to walk by faith – Isaac did!

We are a Kingdom heading family

Make yours a Kingdom heading family – It's a simple yet powerful concept even the young can grasp and explains why your family maintains its godly standards, regardless of what other families may be doing

