“God’s Formula for a Blessed Christian Family”

Colossians 3:18-21
10/30/2016

INTRODUCTION:

***Follow God's secret (formula, prescription) to have the most "perfect" family possible in this life!**

4 Key Formulas for a fulfilled, united, and successful family:
(Note: All four must be present)

I. The Wife's SUBMISSION (v. 18)

II. The Husband's LOVE (v. 19)

III. The Child's OBEDIENCE (v. 20)

IV. The Father's ENCOURAGEMENT (v. 21)

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INTRODUCTION:

We all have imaginations of what the perfect family should be.

Any society is only as strong as the families that make it up.

As the family goes, so goes the country.

To the degree a home is as God designed it to be, is the degree to which a family is blessed.

When families are not governed by God's principles, the society languishes and travails in pain, sorrow, and frustration.

Henry Ford and the Model T (No one knows more about the design than the designer; God knows all about marriage because He created marriage. And He knows how to fix broken marriages) In 1 Peter 3, God informs us as to HOW TO WIN THE HEART OF YOUR SPOUSE.

ILLUS: The great effort put into winning the heart of a boyfriend or girlfriend
(there are words of kindness; tokens of affection (flowers, notes); Expressions of grace (gifts); quality & quantity of time spent together; An eager willingness to overlook trivial differences; A desire to grant forgiveness when needed)

Sad to say, this effort diminishes or dies off after marriage.

If what I say today seems "out of date," offensive, contrary, and unbelievable-- it is because you have let the world brainwash you with its anti-family, anti-Bible, anti-God philosophies.

NOTE: The following injunctions are impossible to fulfill unless you are born again and have "put off" the old attitudes about living and have "put on" the new (3:8-13).

It is possible only after your life is ruled by Christ's peace (v. 15), indwelt by Christ's Word (v. 16), and submitted to Christ's authority (v. 17),

To be brief - the Spirit's fullness is the prerequisite (cp. Eph. 5:18ff).

In 4 brief sentences God unfolds the secret to a fulfilled, contented home.

The basic, foundational principles to family unity, happiness, and prosperity are found in Colossians 3:18-21.

***Follow God's secret (formula, prescription) to have the most "perfect" family possible in this life!**

4 Key Formulas for a fulfilled, united, and successful family:
(Note: All four must be present)

I. The Wife's SUBMISSION (v. 18)

All of life is structured around a "chain of responsibility" (cp. Mt. 8:10).

Three basic divinely established institutions to provide structure (order) and safety (protection) to society:

1) The Home (I Cor. 7:2ff; Eph. 5:22-6:4)

2) The Government (Rom. 13:2)

3) The Church (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24)

These institutions involve submission and authority.

"Submit" - hupotasso - to place yourself under someone's authority.

This word is a military term, which means to rank yourself under. To take your place under the headship and leadership of your husband (I Cor. 11:3).

Submission does not refer to the wife as being inferior in essence, but simply as have a different role or function. (EX: the Father is the Head of Christ [I Cor. 11:3], but in essence is not superior but equal [Phil. 2:6; Jn. 10:30]).

Submission is misunderstood today.
God ordained that Husbands lovingly serve their wives (by providing for them, protecting them, directing them). And wives are to let them. This is the essence of submission. Allow your husband to serve you in the role God gave him.

"Submit yourselves" - middle voice imperative. Meaning: Submission should be voluntary. Something the woman chooses to do herself. God never commands the husband to make his wife submit; forced submission is not submission.

To answer the question: How do I submit to my husband? - ask yourself this question, "How should the church submit to Christ?" (Eph. 5:22-24).

"As it is fit in the Lord" - "fit" = lit. to arrive up to; to come up to a higher level (the level Eve knew before the Fall); to reach a proper standard.

Submission is not degrading in the eyes of the Lord.

For a person who is "in the Lord," God has a higher dimension of living. Anything less than total and absolute submission is not fitting or proper for a Christian.

Submission should be a joy.

The only way for a believing wife to win an unsaved husband to Christ is by living a holy life and by obeying him (I Peter 3:1-6).

A rebellious wife is a witch! Reason: "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (I Sam. 15:23).

II. The Husband's LOVE (v. 19)

The word "love" is the Koine Greek word "agapao." This is a special love.

The love that husbands are to have toward their wives is:

1. A spiritual love - By this I mean it does not come naturally.

   It is a capacity that comes only from God. This love has its source only in God (I Jn. 4:7 - "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.")

   No unsaved man has the capacity (ability) to have such a love.

2. Unconditional love - The kind of love God expects the husband to have is not dependent upon the worthiness of the wife. This love, as ultimately exemplified by God, is a love that gives even when the recipient of that love is an unworthy, evil wretch (Rom. 5:8).

   There are "no strings attached" to agape love. It's not, "I will love her if she . . . retains her youthful figure, cooks like Betty Crocker, cleans like the world's greatest custodian; hugs and kisses like she did on your honeymoon, etc. etc."

   NOTE: Your motive for loving your wife is obedience and love for God! Not the attitude changes it may bring in your spouse, nor for any other immediate reward you may be hoping for. if your motive is what you can get, then you will tend to love as long as you are getting the desired results. Your love will be fickle, on & off, conditioned by selfish motives.

3. Volitional love (a willing love) - a choice; a decision; an act of the will.

   This kind of love is possible even toward an enemy (Mt. 5:44), because it is not based upon a feeling that you conjure up about a person, but rather it is based upon a knowledge that a person (whoever it is) is made in the "image of God" and therefore is worthy of the respect, honor, dignity, and benevolence you show.

   "Love" - not a mere emotional feeling, but does not exclude feeling either. It means to feel for someone (to empathize) and thereby be motivated to respond to meet their needs.

4. Continual love - the present tense imperative emphasizes the constant year by year, day by day, minute by minute nature of the love. For someone to say, "I don't love her anymore" is to say "I do not obey God anymore."

5. Gracious love - it's a love that gives (Jn. 3:16; hence it is often translated "charity" - I Cor. 13); and forgives (I Pet. 4:8).

Basically, to answer the question "How should I love my wife?" -ask yourself another question: "How does Christ love His Church?" (Eph. 5:25-30).

You love your wife by:
Providing for her (financially, etc.)
Talking to her (communicating)
Listening to her
Protecting her (spiritually & physically)

"Be not bitter against them" - Do not allow yourself to become bitter.

Evidently the reason why God added this phrase, is because He knows that this is a tendency in marriages.

The word "bitter" is the opposite of being sweet (cp. Ja. 3:11-14). Often used of bitter water (Rev. 8:11). To have a prolonged bad, irritable, sharp aftertaste remain in your mouth. Metaphorically, it then refers to being repulsed by something. To have an aversion to something.

To be "bitter" in a relationship is to be resentful and unforgiving. Therefore, whenever you think of her a "bad taste" comes to your consciousness. Such bitterness results in evil speaking (Rom. 3:14); hatred (Eph. 4:31); and many destroyed relationships (Heb. 12:15).

How do I know when I am not bitter? Answer: When you can pray for the well-being and blessing of your spouse.

III. The Child's <u>OBEDIENCE</u> (v. 20)

If a modern (contemporary) Bible was written, Colossians 3:20 would say: "Parents, obey your children, for this will keep them happy and bring peace to the home."

The Value of Children

1. Children are a gift from God.

Jacob said regarding his children: "The children which God hath graciously given thy servant" (Gen. 33:5)

He . . . "maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. 113:9)

Ruth 4:13 - "…Lord gave her (Ruth) conception, and she bare a son."

2. God uniquely forms and gifts each child.

a. Psalm 139:13-18 -

b. 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." (cp. II Cor. 4:7)

3. God loves children and desires that they come to know Christ at an early age (Mt. 19:13-15)

Abortion De-values the Life of Children

The following biblical principles must be applied to the issue of abortion:

1. Children are a gift from God (Ps. 127:3)

2. Conception is an act of God (Ruth 4:13)

3. The unborn child is a distinct human life from conception

   a. The baby in the womb is alive (Ps. 51:5)
   b. The baby in the womb is a person (Ps. 139:13; Jer. 1:5)
   c. The baby in the womb is known by God (Ps. 139:13-15)
   d. The baby in the womb is developed by God (Ps. 94:9, 139:13-16)

4. To kill a baby while in the womb is murder! (Exod. 21:22-23)

a. Even in the cases of rape and incest, the unborn child should not be condemned to death because of the sin of the father (Ezek. 18:4, 20; cp. Deut. 24:16)

b. Taking life is the prerogative of God (Dt.32:39)

c. God hates hands that shed innocent blood (Prov. 6:17, 24:11-12)

d. Child sacrifice defiles a country (Lev.18:21)

e. God requires blood when blood is shed (Num. 35:33)

The Nature of Children

The Bible teaches that. . .

1. Mankind was originally created in the image and likeness of God.
Gen. 1:26a - "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"

2. Adam sinned against God and thereby died spiritually and adopted a sin nature.
". . . in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17).
"And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).

3. Adam's descendants were reproduced in his likeness and image.

Gen. 5:3 - "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth."

Rom. 5:12 - "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

4. Each child is born with this sinful human nature.

Ps. 51:5 - "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."
Ps. 58:3 - "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."
Job 14:4 - "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one."
Is. 48:8 - ". . . I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb."

5. Because of inherited sinful human nature, each parent can expect the following traits in his/her children:

a. Each child is prone toward sin.

b. Each child is basically self-centered.

c. Each child must be trained and restrained.

1) Children cannot be left to themselves
(Prov. 29:15 - "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame")

2) Children must have their sinful tendencies controlled
(I Sam. 3:13 - "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not")

The most cruel form of "child abuse" is to ignore your child's needs for self-control and to do nothing to help him/her learn how to restrain the sinful tendencies that seek to enslave him/her.

3) Children are most moldable when they are young
(Prov. 22:6 - "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it")

Our children are like arrows (Ps. 127:4) -- they must be pointed and launched in the right direction.

Our children are like wet cement - they take the impression of whatever you do to them.

Our children are like unhardened clay - pliable to the way you shape them.

Our children are like a tender twig - that we want to bend toward a certain direction. The twig "is to be bent with caution, not broken in the efforts of a rude and hasty zeal"
(Eadie, p. 262).

Due to a child's sin nature, good parents serve as God's tool to protect children from the direction their nature and immaturity would naturally lead them.

Who put the parents in charge?
God did.
God ordained parental authority as His means to serve, provide for, protect and direct children.

Parents have the responsibility to serve their children by providing for them, keeping them safe from harm, and providing guidance and leadership in their lives.

Authorities are in a sense God's "tools" He uses authorities as His "tools" to accomplish His will. The authority functions in a sense like a mediator.

It is sometimes necessary for authorities to utilize force to restrain rebellion and to protect those you are responsible for. For example, Government will use handcuffs and prison when necessary; A good church will use church discipline when necessary; and a good parent will use proper methods of child training including physical chastisement to restrain rebellion and to teach.

When it comes to a parents responsibility for their children, neither government, school, church or any nosey individual has authority over your children. God did not give children to the government, He gave them to you as parents. You as a parent are ultimately responsible. Now you can delegate responsibility, but you are the immediate authority in that child's life.

Without authority you have NO:

1. **Order** (no structure; no chain of command)
2. **Direction** (each does what is right in his/her own eyes; Note: children cannot govern themselves)
3. **Protection** (each is out for their own protection)

Children desperately need leadership (they will get it from someone; their peers, gangs, cults)

Children need leadership in areas of:

- Education (where and what)
- Friends
- Recreation and entertainment
- Diet and Rest

Don't "pass the buck" to the Christian school or church. It's your job to train your children.

Our nation is being systematically overrun with rebellion. Rebellion & disobedience from children is a mark of the "last days"

2 Timothy 3:2 "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy…"

When God judges a nation, rebellion & disobedience from children are a sign:

Romans 1:30 "…Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents"

The prophet Isaiah said to Israel (who were about to be judged by God)
"the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable….. children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." (Isaiah 3:5,12)

God's principles are for God's people. What is a Christian parent to expect from their children? How are Christian children to respond to their parents?
Colossians 3:20 has the answer.

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Such obedience is to be:

1. **<u>Cheerful</u> -**

   "Obey" = hupokouo" - lit. to <u>listen</u> with a <u>submissive</u> heart. Hence, to <u>hear</u> what your parents say and <u>do</u> it. This word translated Obedience is to do what you are told whether you want to or not.

   (Attitude is just as important as action)

2. **<u>Continual</u>** (present imperative)

   Young men, as long as you are under their roof, you are obligated to obey them; young ladies, as long as you are under your parents' authority (until you get married), you are obligated to obey them.

   In I Cor. 7:37-38 and Num. 30:3-f – an unmarried woman is under the authority of her father until he gives her away in marriage.

3. **Respectful** - "your parents"

Respect their God-given position over you. Even if you are bigger than . . . smarter than . . . or stronger than. . . you are to obey them because they are your parents.

It may be that they have a character, career, or conduct that is not worthy of respect. However, you should still respect them for their position's sake. They are "your parents"

4. **Total** - "in all things" (KJV)

Obedience is not to be partial, but total (God does not qualify the obedience). However, the only exception is if your parents ask you to sin (to directly violate a Scriptural principle - cp. Acts 4:19-20, 5:29).

NOTE: God did not say "obey for this is popular" (II Tim. 3:2) or "for this is easy" (indeed it is often difficult) or "for they are worthy" (many are not).

Rather, He said, ***"for this is well pleasing."***

The reason for obedience is simple. It pleases God. It is right! (Eph. 6:1)

God commends the obedient, and condemns the disobedient. To be under the displeasure of God is a dreadful predicament.

A good life and a long life is promised to children who obey their parents (Eph. 6:2).

Parents: Do you want your children to please God? (and thereby be under His blessing?). Then expect nothing less than complete obedience from them. Your motive in expecting obedience should not be your own peace but their well-being.

Respect for parents is so serious that God told Moses: "He who strikes (physically disrespects) his father or his mother shall surely be put to death"; and "He who curses (verbal disrespect) his father or his mother shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 21:15, 17; cp. Lev. 20:9).

See: Ephesians 6:1-3 – God's Simple Commands for Children

Obey

See: Ephesians 6
CHRISTIAN CHILDREN MUST RESPECT THEIR PARENTS
- GOD'S WAY (v. 1-3)

To respect is to obey and honor and to obey and honor is to respect.

GOD REQUIRES RESPECTFUL ACTION (A child's duty is obedience) (v. 1)

"Obey" = implies a readiness to hear; a humble listening so as to do what you're told.

God told Saul: *"To obey is better than sacrifice"* (I Sam. 15:22).

Delayed obedience is disobedience.

Incomplete obedience is disobedience.
(Example: Doing something half way or in the wrong way - not according to the parents instructions)
Children should not be permitted to question why they should obey.

However, children may question what the command was (providing, he/she did not clearly hear or understand the request).

Also, children may ask permission to appeal the command.
That is, they may ask if they may say something in regards to the command given. If a child believes that the request of the parents is unreasonable he/she may with a humble spirit ask the parent who gave the request if he/she would reconsider. If the answer is no, the child should accept the decision as God's will for him/her.

"your parents"

A child is to respect based on the position of the parents, more than because of parent's personal character. EX: We submit to a police officer because of his position. We submit to our elders because of their position. We submit to our teacher because of his position.

The phrase ***"in the Lord"*** teaches three things:

It shows that the children being addressed are Christians.

It shows that the obedience is for the Lord's sake, to please the Lord.

If shows that the obedience is to model the same pattern as you would obey

the Lord.

Children are to obey their parents just as all believers are to obey the Lord. Why? Because parents are the authority, just as the Lord is your authority.

The only time you can disobey your parents is if they ask you to do something sinful (Our Lord would never ask this of His children).

"for this is right"

The reason to obey parents is brief and simple: "For this is right" (correct, just, righteous).

If a contemporary, modern, liberal Bible was written by man, Eph. 6:1 would say, "Parents, obey your children, for this will keep them happy and bring peace to the home" (Wiersbe, p. 150).

One problem - This is <u>not</u> right! Contrary to God's order in nature (even baby animals are taught to obey their parents).

<u>Honor</u>

GOD REQUIRES A <u>RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE</u> (The child's <u>disposition</u> is honor) (v. Ephesians 6:2-3)

"Honor" = to view as very <u>valuable, or precious</u>.

Today, far too many children treat their parents like garbage. No respect for those who brought them into this world, fed, clothed, and schooled them.

How do children show <u>honor</u>?

1) By obeying them without complaint
(Having the right attitude will produce right action)

2) By providing for parents (when they cannot)
(Mt. 15:3-6) (NOTE: Money is no substitute for love)
Note: The Bible teaches we ought to respect the aged:
(Lev.19:32; Job.12:12)

Never refer to your parents as “my old man” or “my old lady”
Children ought to address their elders with respect:
“Yes Sir” or “No Mam” “Mr. _____“ or “Mrs._____“

Even if they are not believers, they are your parents, and you owe them love and

respect.

God's Promises to children who honor their parents:

a. Such an attitude results in a <u>top quality</u> life - *"well with thee . . ."* (v. 3a)

Paul is quoting one of the 10 commandments (Ex. 20:12). This is the only one of the 10 that deals with the family. Why only one! Because if this command was kept, a child would learn the most important lesson of his life -respect for authority.
From this would flow respect for others, for leaders, and most of all for God!

"Well with thee" - they will stay out of things that shorten life and that take the real fun out of life!

2. Such an attitude results in a <u>long quantity</u> of life - *"live long . . ."* (v. 3b)

"This does not mean that everyone who died young dishonored his parents. Paul is stating a principle: When children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives" (Wiersbe, p. 152).

God can mightily use young people who will respect your parents!

As a <u>boy</u>:
<u>Samuel</u> walked with God, <u>Josiah</u> became king and started a spiritual revival, <u>David</u> fought Goliath, <u>Daniel</u> stood up for God and would not eat the king's meat or drink wine.

Obedience is <u>good for you</u>!

It will not only provide a better and longer life, but it will also:

1) Teach you <u>patience</u> (to learn to trust and wait on God)

2) Equip you with <u>self-control</u>

3) Get you ready for a <u>career</u> that will demand respect for authority

4) Get you ready for <u>life</u>, which will not always be "fair" or "just"

5) You will reap in your children what you sowed as a child

IV. The Father's <u>ENCOURAGEMENT</u> (v. 21)

"Fathers" – Why does God address the father and not the mother? Do fathers tend to provoke their children to anger more than mothers do? Perhaps. Why didn't God say "Parents provoke not your children to anger…" After all He addressed the "Parents" in the prior verse (v.20).

Perhaps the primary reason for which God addresses the "fathers" shows the important leadership role a father has in the life of his child.

In Ephesians 6:4 Paul again admonishes the "father" by saying: "And, ye *fathers*, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
Here, Paul expands upon the teaching/training role that a father has regarding his children.

1) Teaching children spiritual truth is primarily the father's responsibility."

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

Joshua claimed this responsibility ("but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Josh. 24:15)

God held Eli responsible for failing to instruct and correct his sons ("For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." - I Sam. 3:13).

Solomon said in Proverbs 1:8 "My son, hear the instruction of thy father…"

In the N.T. the apostle Paul assumes that fathers know that it is their role to encourage and bear witness to the truth to their children: "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children" (1 Thessalonians 2:11)

The writer of Hebrews said: If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the *(earthly)* father chasteneth not? (Hebrews 12:7)

"The Father to the children shall make known Thy truth." (Is. 38:19)

"I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.
For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Psalm 78:3-5)

When did God command the fathers to teach their children?

See: Deuteronomy 6:4-6

***God wants fathers to begin a legacy that you hand down to the next generation.**

How can you begin a new legacy (that upholds and preserves God's moral and spiritual principles for others to follow)?

1. Dad, Be All That You Should Be (v. 4-6)
(Let God light the torch in your own life!)

"Hear" - Heb. *shema* - This word begins the well-known "Shema" which encompassed v. 4-9 and set these verses apart as Judaism's basic confession of faith (their doctrinal statement in brief).

a. Let the Lord be the only God of your life (v. 4)

"Yahweh our Elohim is <u>one</u> Yahweh" - In a day of idolatry and polytheism, this sentence proclaims the exclusiveness and uniqueness of God.

Yahweh is the <u>one</u> and <u>only</u> Yahweh (monotheism).

b. Love the Lord with whole-hearted devotion (v. 5)

It's not enough to merely know God

theologically; we must love Him relationally.

According to Jesus, this is the first and greatest command in Scripture (Mk. 12:30).

"Thou shalt love" - The imperitival force shows that our love for God is not automatic emotion but a deliberate decision (volitional, act of the will, a choice). No half-hearted devotion will do.

HOW should we love God?
"Heart . . . soul . . . mind. . . strength" = Love Him with your whole being; with everything you have.
When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:

a. The center of my affections *"heart"*
b. The center of my life *"soul"*
[c. The center of my thoughts] *"mind"* Mark 12:28
d. The center of my activity *"strength"*

c. Hide the Word of the Lord in your heart by memorizing it (v. 6)

"These words" - the command to love God, as well as the rest of Deuteronomy.

The only way to keep God's Word *"in our heart"* is to memorize it.

"In thine heart" - not in one of thine ears and out of the other -- but permanently stored away!

Deut. 6:5 - Half-hearted devotion is unacceptable. Verse 6 - Love must come from the inner self

It is only after personally appropriating truth, after internalizing it ourselves , that we can teach our children.

2. Dad, Pass On To Your Children What God Gave You (v. 7) (Pass on the torch to the succeeding generation! Deut. 29:29b)

Teaching is to be:

1) **<u>Repetitious</u>** - *"Diligently"* = from a Hebrew word which describes the activity of sharpening a metal object by repeated strokes of a sanding block. (Don't grow weary about repeating lessons. Remember how often God must teach us (many times the same lesson) over and over)

2) **<u>Specific</u> content** - *"Them"* = the "words" of verse 6. The word, law, or commands of God.

3) **<u>Informal</u>** - weave teaching into your normal everyday routine.

a. Simultaneous with other activity *(<u>when</u>- "sitting, walking, lying down")*

b. Different locations - *"house road, bed"* (God teaches us not only at church [formally] but also during work, home, etc.)

4) **<u>Continual</u>** -

a. At different times (day & night activities)

b. All the time (from morning to morning)

While a continual, informal teaching of our children is the real key to their spiritual knowledge and growth, a specific time set apart each day is also vitally important.

A **"Family Time"; "Family Devotions"; or "Family Altar"** should be:

1) <u>short</u>
2) <u>serious</u>
3) <u>interesting</u>

2) The fact that God addresses the "Fathers" shows headship and ultimate responsibility of the dad. The father sets the direction and a Godly wife supports the direction.

Such involvement of fathers in the life of children will be scarce in the last days. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Malachi 4:5-6)

See: **Ephesians 6:4 – "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."**

"Bring them up" - (Ektrepho) to feed; to provide nourishment (cp. Eph.5:29)

a. "Raise them in the nurture of the Lord"

"Nurture" (Paideia) = This word comes from the word: "Pais" which means child; and refers to the systematic training of children. Paideia specifically means to train a child by discipline; to correct; to chasten (I Cor. 11:32; II Cor. 6:9; I Tim. 1:20; Heb. 12:6f, 10; Rev. 3:19; Lk. 23:16, 22) (See the section of Notes dealing with "How to Discipline your child")

"When children are young, it is natural for parents to exercise maximum control. But, as a child grows older, the external controls should gradually be withdrawn. This withdrawal is possible only as he is progressively taught and demonstrates the willingness to control himself. It is important for a child to be trained before the parents lose their ability to control him." (Fugate, p.169)

When a child develops internal controls the parental external controls become less and less needed. A well trained child will understand the Parent's standards for acceptable behavior and the reasons behind those standards.

b. "Raise them in the admonition of the Lord" (v. 4c)

"Admonition" (Nouthesia) = lit. "to put into the mind; to

correct the thinking" (not merely factual information, but right attitudes and principles of behavior)

Parental admonition will involve:

1. Teaching your children Bible Principles.
2. Encouraging your child's positive character and behavior.
2. Verbally confronting your child's disobedience.
3. Lovingly rebuking such disobedience or sin.
4. Instructing the Child as to:
    - What is right
    - What is not right
    - How to make it right
    - How to keep it right

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition **of <u>the Lord</u>**"

The phrase "of the Lord" has 3 obvious ideas:

1) Bring them up the same way God brings up His children.
2) Bring them up in the principles of the Lord; In His Word.
3) Bring them up by means of the power of His Holy Spirit to His glory and honor.

Colossians 3:21

"Provoke" - to <u>push</u> your children; or harshly <u>irritate</u> them; to <u>stir</u> them up in a bad sense

"Discouraged" (from "a thumeo") which literally means to <u>be without heat</u>.

The word describes a child who has lost heart, his spirit has been broken, his youthful zeal, zest, spunk is gone. Rather than obeying cheerfully, because of harsh or improper discipline the child goes about his task in a listless, moody, sullen frame of mind" (Lightfoot).

<u>Ways</u> Fathers (Parents) <u>provoke</u> their children to anger:

1. <u>Unbiblical</u> discipline

"Spare the rod, spoil the child" (Ben Franklin)

Biblical (proper) discipline is needed. Proverbs has much to say about it.

There is a right way to discipline.

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

a. **Harsh discipline** (unloving attitude; with anger/wrath)
"A child frequently irritated by over-severity or injustice, to which, nevertheless it must submit, acquires a spirit of sullen resignation, leading to despair." (Abbott, cited by Reinecker, p. 582).

One young girl said: “my father would use a cannon to kill a mosquito”

b. **Unbalanced discipline** (need both - rod and reproof - nurture and admonition)

c. **Abusive discipline (**uncontrolled or wrong mode and instrument)
A parent should never punch, pull the hair, ears etc. or kick a child.

d. **Inconsistent discipline** (Be consistent. A very important part of parenting is not to just do it when you feel like it.)

It’s confusing to children to be reprimanded on one occasion and completely overlooked for the same infraction on another occasion.

ILLUS: If the traffic laws or laws of nature changed every day, you'd be very frustrated and confused. So are our kids when we are inconsistent!!

*Never let someone else (with differing standards) raise your kids. Beware of permissive grandparents!

2. **Neglect** (making them feel unwanted, a bother, not worthy of your time; so they turn to drugs, alcohol, immorality, bad friends (gangs))

Example: David’s neglect of his son, Absalom

(Harry Chapin’s song in the 70’s – “Cats in the Cradle”)

3. **Favoritism** (Ex: Isaac favored Esau over Jacob; Rebekah preferred Jacob over Esau)
Treat all of your children equally.

4. **Discouragement** - "You never do anything right!" - A failure to commend and praise positive character.

Praise your child for his/her character (not his intelligence, or beauty, etc.). Praise your children for doing right (EX: "A" on a test, being honest, taking initiative to do something without being told, for doing an exceptional job). This will encourage them to continue to do right.

It takes seven praises to offset one criticism.

5. **Pressure to achieve** (nothing they do pleases you)

Our goal should be that God's will be done in our child's life. Not our will.
Too often a parent will pressure a child to succeed with a motive of stroking the parent's own ego.

6. **Unfaithful to promises** - You build up their hopes (by promising something), then dash them (through neglect, etc.)
God always keeps His word; We should keep ours.

7. **Hypocrisy** – (Play acting; pretending to be something you are not; You say one thing, but do another; "Your walk talks and your talk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks"

Children need to have fathers who are doers of God's will (not merely teachers of it).
We cannot be bad examples!

Paul wrote to Timothy:
Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

"Despise" - To think down upon; to under-rate; to think slightly of.

Some might think: "what does he know about God, spiritual matters, about fathering, etc. He's but a young man, inexperienced, etc.

“Youth” - not necessarily someone who is a teenager or pre-adolescent.

“In the ancient world a person between 30 and 40 years old could be considered young (Kelly). One Rabbi said that a person at 30 was fit for authority and at 40 he was fit for discernment (M, Aboth V, 21) (cited by Reinecker, p. 627).
Paul writes to Timothy, who is the pastor at Ephesus. He is not a boy, but a young man in charge of the spiritual leadership of this important area of Asia Minor. So Timothy must be somewhere between 25 and 35 years old (just about where most Dads are with young, impressionable children).

Being young is no excuse for a bad testimony, language (“word”), lifestyle (“conversation”), relationships (“love”), attitude (“spirit”), convictions (“faith”), morals (“purity”).

“Be thou an example” (present, middle, imperative - ginou from ginomai) - Become thou. Regardless of your past, start setting a good example. Perhaps you have been a failure in your past; this word points to a new beginning.

The present tense implies a continual (lifelong) example.

The middle voice implies choice and determination (an act of the will) that you will decide to be exemplary.

“Example” - tupos from which we translate “type.”

Tupos primarily denoted "a blow" (from a root tup--, seen also in tupto, "to strike"), hence,
(a) an impression, the mark of a "blow," <John 20:25>;
(b) the "impress" of a seal, the stamp made by a die, a figure, image, <Acts 7:43>;
(c) a "form" or mold, <Rom. 6:17> (see RV);
(d) the sense or substance of a letter, <Acts 23:25>;
(e) "an ensample," pattern, <Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5>, "pattern"; in an ethical sense, <1 Cor. 10:6; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thes. 1:7; 2 Thes. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12>,
(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
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Men, we need to be . . .

--a mold worth duplicating.
--a pattern worth copying
--a model worth imitating

Example . . .

1) Example plays an important part in the formation of character; and its influence is felt more than that of precept.

"Children possess an imitative disposition. They look up to their parents as the pattern or model of their character, and conclude what they do is right and worthy of their imitation." (Rev. S. Phillips, 1858, The Christian Home, cited in Teaching and Learning America's Christian History, the Principle Approach, by Rosalie J. Slater).

2) Example may be good or bad (it is never neutral).

3) Example is teaching by action
Thus, the child is a living commentary upon his/her home and his/her parents. The child is the moral reproduction of the parent (whatever you sow will be reaped).

4) Example instructs a child before he/she can learn to speak and understand words (Phillips)

(Children from birth are like "walking camcorders" recording everything they see visually and audibly in your life and home)

* Dad, your family needs you to be an example worth following!

1. Be an example worth copying in your LANGUAGE
(Can your children copy how you TALK?)

We sin with our tongue when we:

--gossip
--lie
--use foul language (curse words, vulgarity)
--speak idle talk (vanity)
--sing the devil's song (beware of the music you hear and sing)
--tear others down

"In word" - in speech; refers here to what you say and how you say it.
The content of your words and the manner in which you say them.

Inflection, tone, pitch, etc., communicate more than the actual words you say!

How did you talk to your wife and children on the way to church this morning?

Do your words hurt or help? Build up or tear down? Edify or mortify?

If walls had ears (and could gossip), what would the walls of your home say you said?

Eph. 4:29 - Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

2. Be an example worth copying in your LIFESTYLE
(Can your children copy how you ACT?)

"Conversation" - An old English word which meant behavior, conduct, manner of living, or lifestyle.

What behavioral traits do your children see in you?

Do they see . . .

--laziness
--materialism
--gluttony
--self-centeredness

"Your walk talks and your talk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks."

What you do speaks so loudly that (if your kids see inconsistency in you), they will not hear what you say!

Is your home a haven or rest or a war zone? (a scene of fighting, arguing, clamoring – each selfishly out for their own interests)

God would never ask us to be something that He is not.

We should never be hypocrites and command something of our children that we don't do. If you do, your children may comply (they will listen to you) until they become teenagers.

Don't set double standards.

If you impress upon your sons the need for diligence, truthfulness, respect for the "golden rule" but are a quitter (jobs, serving Christ, etc.), boast of shady business conquest, or boast of your own getting even with others – don't be shocked at the children you produce!

3. Be an example worth copying in your RELATIONSHIPS
(Can your children copy how you LOVE?)

What is your relationship to your family?

Love is measured by the time and attention you give to them; by the unselfish sacrifice you make for their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being

4. Be an example worth copying in your ATTITUDE
(Can your children copy your ZEAL FOR GOD?)

"In Spirit" - (T.R. & KJV) - to be an example "in Spirit") means to have a zest (zeal) for spiritual things; to have an enthusiastic attitude about God and the things of God.

This person is not dull, drab, or depressed, but is excited about Christ and the new and abundant life He gives.

Mom and Dad set the mood for the home. A child's display of emotions is often a reflection of the frustration he/she feels over the mood of his parents.

"Let your light so shine before your children..."

Note: In setting the example, this does not mean that you never admit the Wrong you commit. You must. Parents need to be real and transparent in front of their children. They need to see that you make mistakes, seek forgiveness when needed, admit fault.

5. Be an example worth copying in your CONVICTIONS
(Can your children copy what you BELIEVE?)

A conviction is a belief you would be willing to die for.

Do you have “Sunday morning only” convictions?
Sooner or later, fathers, your children will need to understand what motivates our speech, conduct, and love. What drives our outward actions? What fuels our behavior? It must be faith.

Does your faith drive you to action? Does it influence your behavior?

If it produces no works, then it is surely dead and useless (you really don’t believe).

--when was the last time your son or daughter saw you on your knees?

--when was the last time your children witnessed you reading God’s Word? (you don’t do it to be seen by them, but if you do walk with God within your house, they will see it).

ILLUS: A child said, "Dad, what is God like?" The reply: "I don't know - go ask your mother."

No dad knows all the answers, but he should know the elementary doctrines of the Christian faith - for we are responsible to God to teach our children!

A family without a father is like a teach without a coach; like a plane without a pilot; like a ship without a navigator.

6. Be an example worth copying in your HOLINESS
(Can your children copy your MORALITY?)

"Purity" - Holiness or sanctity. The word refers to purity of act and thought (Lock).

The word covers not only chastity in matters of sex, but also the innocent and integrity of heart (cp. II Cor. 6:6) (Kelly) (cited by Reinecker, p. 627)

You can't say "Son, keep yourself pure . . . remain a virgin, etc." when you are slouched down on your couch watching porn and sleaze on your TV set!

Your moral purity (or lack thereof) (to a degree) will be reaped in your children.

Are you the kind of person you would want your son to become?

Would you want your daughter to marry someone like you, Dad?

When you die, will you leave behind memories that point to God?

Will you leave your children a faith and example that will guide them when your voice speaks no more?

SEE POEM "To Any Daddy"

CONCLUSION:

You cannot withdraw blessings from your home until you deposit into it.

The Law of sowing and reaping applies (Galatians 6:7).

Whatever you invest into your relationship will determine what you get out of it.

MY RESOLUTION

I do solemnly resolve before God
to take full responsibility
for myself, my wife and my children.

I will love them, protect them, and serve them.

I will teach them the statutes of God
as the spiritual leader of my home.

I will be faithful to my wife, to love and honor her,
and be willing to lay down my life for her as Christ did for me.

I will teach my children to love God with all of their heart,
all of their mind, and all of their strength.

I will train them to honor authority and live responsibly.

I will set an example of faithfulness in my walk
with the Lord and in my service for Him.

I will work diligently to provide for the needs of my family.

I will walk in integrity as a man answerable to God.

I will seek to honor God, obey His Word, and do His will.

I recognize that I must rely exclusively upon
the grace and power of God to fulfill this resolution.
I submit to His strength and wisdom.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."