A Father's Responsibility toward his Children

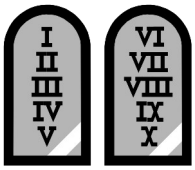
(Selected Scriptures)
6/16/02

Introduction:

**** Parents, we must realize the responsibility God has given us regarding our children, and fulfill our responsibility faithfully!***

When it comes to our children, we have 3 major areas to which we will give an account to God:

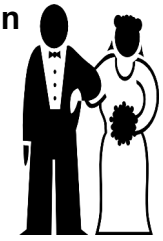
I. **We are responsible to oversee the <u>Spiritual Preparation</u> of our Children**
(Consider your role in the <u>Doctrinal Training</u> of your children)
(Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4)



II. **We are responsible to oversee the <u>Academic Preparation</u> of our Children**
(Consider your role in the <u>Christian Education</u> of your children)
(Psalm 78:1-6 and other Scriptures dealing with a Biblical World View)



III. **We are responsible to oversee the <u>Marriage Preparation</u> of our Children**
(Consider your role in the <u>Courtship and Marriage</u> of your children)
(I Corinthians 7:36-39; Genesis 24)



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(Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4)

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!

Joshua didn't just say, "My house will serve the Lord." He didn't just send the wife and kids off to church. He said, "As for <u>me</u> and my house, <u>we</u> will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15)

ARE YOU <u>TEACHING</u> YOUR FAMILY? (Deut. 6:7)

Teaching children spiritual truth is primarily the <u>father's</u> responsibility."

"The <u>Father</u> to the children shall make known Thy truth." (Is. 28:19)

Abraham was responsible to instruct his children and his household" (Gen. 18:19)

Joshua claimed this responsibility (Josh. 24:15)

God held Eli responsible for failing to instruct and correct his sons (I Sam. 3:f13).

In the N.T. the command is to <u>Fathers</u> to bring them up in the <u>nurture</u> and admonition of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4; cp. I thes. 2:11)

Teaching is to be:

1) Repetitious - "Diligently" = from a word which describes the activity of sharpening a metal object by repeated strokes of a sanding block. (ILLUS: How God must teach us over and over)

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

3) Informal - weave teaching into your normal everyday routine.
   a. Simultaneous with other activity (when - sitting, walking, lying down)
   b. Different locations - house road, bed (ILLUS: how God teaches us not only at church [formally] but also during work, home, etc.)

4) Continual -
   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 short, serious, and interesting.

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!

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).

See Ephesians 6:4:

God requires us to:

A. NEGATIVE COMMAND: "Don't provoke your children to wrath" (v. 4a)

"Fathers" = shows headship and ultimate responsibility of the dad. The father sets the direction and the wife supports the direction.

Ways parents provoke children to wrath (MacArthur, p. 318):

1) Overprotection (never trust them to do things on their own)

2) Favoritism (EX: Isaac who favored Esau over Jacob and Rebekah preferred Jacob over Esau).

3) Pressure to achieve (nothing they do pleases you)

4) Discouragement ("You never do anything right") Praise your child for his/her <u>character</u> (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.

5) Feeling unwanted - Paul said in Col. 3:21, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be <u>discouraged</u>." The quickest way to discourage a person is to <u>neglect</u> him.

6) Physical or verbal abuse

7) Unbiblical discipline (inconsistencies).

Be consistent. A very important part of parenting is not to just do it when you feel like it.

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!

8) Spoiling your child.

Beware of "child-centered" parenting! All our relationships, activity, etc. should revolve around God, not our children.

Children shouldn't dictate whether you go to church, have company, etc.

B. POSITIVE COMMAND

1. "Raise them in the <u>discipline</u> of the Lord" (v. 4b)

"Nurture" = 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)

a. Why to discipline

1) Your child needs to learn the difference between right & wrong

Many are living in the depths of sin today because of parents that didn't care enough to say: "No!" and restrain their children by discipline. One girl gave this testimony: "I never knew how far I could go . . . because my parents never cared enough to discipline me. I figured that if it wasn't important to them, why should it be to important to me?" (Wiersbe, p. 155).

2) Your child needs to learn the price for sin

Physical discipline teaches that sin always has consequences. Sin will always sting! There is a price for sin. The child sees himself as a law-breaking sinner in need of God's grace.

The result of discipline is that the child will be brought back into line with what he should be.

Spanking is not punishment (to pay back), but discipline (to teach) right from wrong and to change attitude and action (Heb. 12)

Spanking is an at of love (Heb. 12:6; Prov. 13:24 - "Hateth" - not an emotion, but an action, a lack of positive action; "betimes" = early = 1) young in life (diligence from day 1); 2) early in the offense (right away in the offense).

Prov. 19:18 - "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

"Nurture . . . of the Lord" - we are to discipline our children the same way the Lord disciplines his children.

1) Out of love (for our own good)
2) Consistently
--Discipline must be fair and consistent. Someone once said: My father would use a cannon to kill a mosquito! I either get away with murder, or get blamed for everything" (Wiersbe, p. 155).
3) Effectively (you know it when God is dealing with you)

c. When to discipline

Answer: For every act of rebellion against authority.

Examples of Rebellion:

1) Rebellious Attitude

When the child pouts or whines (throws fit).

2) Rebellious Action

a. When the child disobeys by omitting right action

When a child consistently says, "I forgot" - this shows he rebelled against putting an effort into learning the lesson.

When you give instruction - say what you mean, and mean what you say (Ezzo, p. 43). (Don't speak rashly, because you must hold them accountable for whatever you said)

If I ask my child to do something, and he does not respond (assuming he heard me), he/she is in sin. But if I call him twice, **I** am the one in sin! Why? By repeating my request, I am reinforcing and encouraging my child's disobedience. This is, in fact, training them in unrighteousness. (Ezzo, p. 43)

For obedience to be real obedience, it must be:

1. Immediate - Delay is disobedience. Children are to obey the first time you ask (immediately). The reason they don't respond until the fourth time is because you have trained (conditioned) them that they don't have to until then (that you aren't going to do anything about their disobedience until then).

After God teaches us something from His Word, what percent (%) of the time does God want immediate and complete obedience? 100%

As parents, if we expect less than 100%, we are teaching our children disobedience.

When we tell our children to be quiet, and they are quiet 80% of the time, we put up with it. What will you do when you tell your children, "Don't sleep with your girlfriend" and they only obey 80% of the time??

2. Without Question (can ask "What" to clarify command, but never "Why") We are to ask God "Why" about trials, but never about obedience. Sometimes God provides a reason, but we have no right to ask Why.

3. Without Complaint. Attitude is just as important as action. Grudging compliance reveals a heart that is not willing to obey.

4. Complete - Partial obedience is not obedience.

b. When the child disobeys by committing wrong action

When a child talks back, he has rebelled.

If a dad gives a command, and the child appeals to mom. That child has just undermined Dad's authority.

Another example of challenging authority: The reply, "Why can't I" or "Do I have to?"

2. "Raise them in the instruction of the Lord" (v. 4c)

Discipline is more than spanking.

Two parts to discipline (Prov. 29:15): "The Rod and Reproof" --
physical chastisement (negative)
verbal instruction (positive)

"Admonition" = lit. "to put into the mind" (not merely factual information, but right attitudes and principles of behavior)

Prov. 22:6 - "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is an axiomatic, eternal principle from God (NOTE: context describing causes and resultant effects)

"Train" = to begin, or initiate a young child in the right direction. To start out right.

Same word as when Solomon initiated/dedicated the newly-constructed Temple (I Ki. 8:63; II Chron. 7:5)

The word originally meant to "rub the palate" of a child with chewed dates to get it to acquire a taste for food; EX: midwives would rub palate with oil before child began to suck. The word means to make experienced or accustomed to what you want (as a horse gets accustomed to being directed by a rope in its mouth) (BDB, p. 335)

If we get our children accustomed to what is right, they won't depart!

II. We are responsible to oversee the Academic Preparation of our Children

(Consider your role in the Christian Education of your children)
(Psalm 78:1-6 and other Scriptures dealing with a Biblical World View)

"Children are an heritage of the Lord"

What a gift children are! What a thrill, blessing, responsibility!

Examples of good parental intentions never amounting to much as your stimulated ambition for raising a child up right from birth becomes quickly clouded by other things.

NOTE: Introductory Title to Psalm 78 - "Maschil of Asaph" = a teaching poem (or parable) by Asaph.

No parent can afford to neglect the lessons to be learned in this chapter.

Asaph's warning comes lest history should repeat itself (NOTE: the failure of Israel's forefathers - v. 11, 17, 18, 19, 22, 36, 37, 41, 42, 56, 57)

v.4

"The praises" - God-honoring psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

"His strength" - His attributes of omnipotence, etc.

"His wonderful works" - His actions throughout history. History = His Story

"The praises . . . His strength . . . His wonderful works" - Note the positive nature of what fathers are to pass on to their children.

The greatest things you could ever teach your children is about the words and works of your God.

To teach your children about math, science, history, sports, computers, business, dating, marriage, money matters, etc., without bringing God into the picture is inadequate.

"The best education is education in the best things" (Spurgeon).

V. 8

Though our heritage and ancestors may not have known and feared God, through salvation and obedience to teaching our children, we can change the tide! We can stop the progression of evil, and raise up a new generation!

"Disobedience is not to be excused because it is hereditary. The leprosy was none the less loathsome because it had been long in the family" (Spurgeon).

"How blessed would it be if each age improved upon its predecessor." (Spurgeon)

THE BENEFITS OF HOME-SCHOOLING

1. From a Christian standpoint Home-Schooling fulfills God's mandate that parents be responsible for the training of their children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

2. Home-Schooling allows the mother the opportunity to fulfill God's role for her as a *"keeper (worker) at home"* (Titus 2:5; I Timothy 5:14).

3. Home-Schooling provides a safe learning environment.
(There are no “box cutters” illegal guns, knives, and gangs to worry about)

4. Home-Schooling provides a setting whereby family bonds are strengthened (the children and parent relationship is enhanced).

5. Home-Schooling provides a flexible schedule whereby the family can be freed to pursue extra activities during the week (traveling, ministries, music, etc.) which would be difficult in a regular school schedule.

6. Home-Schooling provides correctly balanced socialization (whereby children learn how to get along with older and younger siblings and learn how to relate to their parents; parent-child communication is enhanced).

7. Home-Schooling insulates your children from ungodly peer influences.

8. Home-Schooling offers protection from false teaching (like evolution, humanism, liberalism, New Age philosophies).

9. Home-Schooling, if properly done, will provide a superior education.

--Personal attention
--Personal concern
--Lower student-teacher ratio than any school
--Excellent teaching materials are available
--Character and discipline development
--Teaching is commensurate with child's abilities and interests

10. Home-Schooling sharpens the education and skills of the involved parents.

11. Support groups, legal protection, and educational training are provided in most states.

III. We are responsible to oversee the Marriage Preparation of our Children

(Consider your role in the Courtship and Marriage of your children)
(I Corinthians 7:36-39; Genesis 24)

This whole chapter of I Cor. 7 answers the question: "Should I marry or not?"

Verses 25-38 deal specifically with virgins and whether or not they should remain unmarried, especially in light of the ***"present distress"*** (v. 26) they were facing.

V. 36

A general interpretation of verses 36-38:

Who is the ***"man"*** spoken about in verses 36-38?

Some say Paul is addressing the virgin's fiance, who is engaged (betrothed) to her (NIV interpretation).

A better view is that Paul is addressing the father of a virgin daughter (KJV, NASV).

Reasons:

1) The one referred to has authority over the virgin (a fiance has none).

2) The third person plural imperative ***"Let them marry"*** indicates that Paul is speaking to someone outside of the couple.

3) ***"Giveth . . . in marriage"*** - (*gamizon)* - pres. act. participle. "Verbs with this ending are generally causative ('to give in marriage')." (Reinecker, p. 410).

4) The widow can marry *"whom she will"* (v. 39); this is an evident contrast to the will of her father (v. 37), who arranged her first marriage.

5) The custom of Paul's day was arranged marriages. The girl was under the authority of her dad until he gave her to the authority of another man in marriage. Even today we have a trace of this custom in America, as the preacher says at the wedding altar, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" "I do" or "Her mother and I" Most marriage sin foreign countries today are either arranged or have a heavy parental involvement.

> "In Jewish culture, parents, and particularly fathers, had long had a dominant role in deciding whom their children would marry. The same general custom prevailed in many ancient societies, including that of Rome. Some historians credit Rome's decline in part to the weakening of the family caused by loss of parental control in arranging marriages. In New Testament times the arranged marriage, especially for young people, was the norm." (MacArthur, p. 185).

"In light of the extant teaching about the advantages of singleness, some of the fathers of Corinth apparently had dedicated their young daughters to the Lord as permanent virgins" (MacArthur, p. 185) (EX: Jepthah's daughter)

If the father, for whatever reason, senses that he is not doing what is best in her self interest by keeping his daughter unmarried, he should give her away in holy matrimony.

V. 37

Paul basically says that a father who has decided (for whatever reasons) that he should keep his daughter unmarried *"doeth well."*

V. 38

Giving a daughter in marriage in not a difference of right or wrong, but a difference of "good" (*"well")* and "better." In some situations, it is *"better"* not to marry.

***Observe some implicit principles that will get you ready for a blessed marriage!**

1) Be a VIRGIN Until Marriage (implied in verses 36-37)

"Virgin" *(parthenon)* - In context, an unmarried woman who has not had sexual relations (EX: the Virgin Mary).

The benefits of being a virgin until marriage:

1. You have a clean conscience (free from guilt)
2. You avoid the trap of feeling obligated to marry the one you had sex with
3. You look forward with greater anticipation to the consummation of your marriage
4. You earn the respect of your future spouse (and others)
5. You avoid illegitimate pregnancy
6. You avoid sexually-transmitted diseases
7. You obey God and honor His plan for marriage

2) Honor PARENTAL AUTHORITY Before Marriage (implied in verses 36-38)

Two clearly taught principles:

A. An unmarried woman is under the authority of her father

Throughout the Bible, an unmarried woman was under the authority of her father until he gave her away in marriage.

EX: Rebekah to her father Bethuel (Gen. 24:24, 50-51)
Rachel to her father Laban (Gen. 29:21)

Another evidence of the authority of a father over his daughter is seen in Num. 30:3ff, in which a father could invalidate a vow she made as long as she lived in his house.

Our society today knows very little about he issue of parental authority.

More and more, it's not the parents who run the home, it's the kids.

Disobedience to parental authority is a mark of the "*last days."* (II Tim. 3:2)

It was always God's design that a woman be provided for and protected; she should not have to fend for herself. She was always to be under the care of either her dad or her husband.

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. 13:1-f)
3) The Church (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; I Peter 5:1-5)

These institutions involve submission and authority.

An "AUTHORITY" is someone with a position of oversight.

The position of authority is ultimately given by God (Rom.13:1).

This position of authority is one of service (an "authority" is a servant- Rom.13:4))

This position of authority is to provide leadership, training, and/or protection for the well being of the one(s) served.

The one who holds such a position of authority is responsible to God and will answer to God (cp. Heb.13:17).

The one who is expected to submit to the authority will also be accountable to God for how he/she responded to the authority.

Respect for parents is so serious that God told Moses:

*"He who **strikes** **(physical disrespect)** 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; Proverbs 30:11-f; See: Deut.21:18-21).

Proverbs 20:20 - *"Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness"* (ie. his life will be snuffed out)

If a girl will not submit to her father's authority, neither will she submit to her husband's.

Young people, if you are not submitted to your parent's authority, it is because you are not submitted to God! (Eph. 6:1-2)

Genesis 24

Dating is an American custom. "Dating as practiced in the United States is a social custom peculiar to this country. Observers from other countries and also American's of the older generation, whose social customs differed from those of today, view the current dating system with bewilderment and alarm" (Landis & Landis).

Why did dating develop in America? Because of a large variety of life styles, speech, dress, values, child-rearing methods, spiritual qualities, etc.

What is wrong with a dating arrangement which tends to avoid or neglect parental involvement or oversight?

1) Dating creates an awkward environment for many (especially those with shy personalities) to make contact and establish relationships with the opposite sex.

2) Unsupervised dating opens the door for sexual temptation (the plug of a hand grenade has been pulled)

3) Dating without parental involvement makes it difficult for many to break off a relationship that they think is not the one for them.

4) Dating misses out on the wisdom and insight that otherwise might be offered by parents who can look beyond looks and discern character more easily.

5) Dating creates an artificial environment for evaluating another person's character (we need to see each other in the real-life settings of family and friends) (Jeffrey Vasquez).

6) Dating often leads to premature, hurtful deepening relationships (don't date if you are not ready for the responsibility of caring for a mate.)

7) Dating often ties up so much time and attention that it isolates the couple from other important relationships.

8) Dating can actually pave the way and condition the couple for a future divorce

(When dating, a guy meets a girl, dates her, and then after some time he sees he doesn't like her, so he dumps her. Then he finds another one and does the same. This goes on and on until finally he marries. After a time in the marriage, he finds he doesn't like her, so what is his natural preconditioned impulse? To dump her.)

9) Dating will often result in baggage from previous deep relationships being carried into a future marriage (guilt, suspicions, jealousy, comparisons, disillusionment, etc.)

10) Due to dating, "once marriage does occur, the couple no longer feels the need to focus on winning each other's hearts. The relationship begins to cool off." (Gothard)

How do you look for a spouse for your children?

Genesis 24

A. Look to God in <u>prayer;</u> (Ask for His kind blessing) (v.12,15)

v. 12
Trusting God is the key to attaining all successes in life! (Prov. 3:5-6)

We must begin praying towards our children's future marriage partner. Now is a good time to start!

B. Look for <u>godly initiative</u> and <u>a servant's heart</u> in the potential spouse (v.13-14)

v. 14
"I will give thy camels drink" –

To show kindness to an old man who requests water would be customary, but to willingly offer water for his ten camels would be extraordinary.

Do you realize how much water ten camels could drink??

Eliezer is not merely "throwing out a fleece" (as Gideon did) to determine God's will; he is looking for a girl with initiative and a servant's heart. This was a character test.

"The details of his test were not arbitrarily chosen; they would indicate a kind and industrious nature in the woman." (Ross, p. 419).

v. 15
God often answers prayers before we are done asking!

Abraham's great-niece would be the first female to appear after Eliezer opened his eyes from prayer!

C. Look for one who would be physically <u>attractive</u> and <u>morally pure</u> (v.16)

"Very fair to look upon" - When God calls someone beautiful, they surely must be beautiful!
Physical attractiveness is important, but it is not most important.
Before anyone marries, there should be a physical attraction, some "chemistry."
And truly, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

"A virgin" – It should be the goal of every Christian girl to remain sexually pure all the way to marriage, and parents must pray and oversee the child toward this end.

It is a shame for an unmarried Christian to engage in sexual activity apart from marriage! Fornication should not be named among us <u>even once</u>!

D. Look for one who shows the virtues of <u>kindness</u>, <u>respect</u>, and <u>diligence</u> (v.17-27)

v. 18
Rebekah's kindness and respect is evident by her words and actions.

Young men, the best way to see how that girl is going to treat you is to find out how she treats others (especially how she treats her parents or those in authority in her life).

v. 19-20
What toil! To fill waterpots to quench the thirst of **"all ten camels"** is no small task!

Beware of the lazy girl! Stay away from the dead head!
The female whose room is untidy, who does little toward household chores, is hardly ready for the responsibilities of marriage!

Marry a worker! Not one who will lie around the house all day eating chocolates!

v. 21
"Wondering at her" – Her diligent spirit <u>amazed</u> Eliezer. He couldn't believe what he saw!

v. 22
Rebekah never expected to be remunerated with such abundance for her kindness!

v. 26-27
Eliezer throughout this chapter is constantly seeing God's blessing in answer to his prayers!

E. Meet the <u>parents</u>, whose authority the young person is under until given away in marriage (v.28-61)

v. 33
Eliezer hadn't come for a banquet; he came for business! A man on a mission.

v. 36
Rebekah's financial security would be a concern to Bethuel, especially since she would travel so far that he might never see her again.

v. 42-48
Eliezer makes it known how God has been leading him, and that the circumstances involving Rebekah were too coincidental to be accidental.

1. Seek the <u>parental blessing</u> on the relationship (v.50-56; 60)

v. 50
Giving a daughter away in marriage is something that seems to the parents as **"neither bad or good."**

When God is in the situation, it certainly is not bad; and if you are about to lose a daughter, it doesn't feel too good!

v. 55
We will see later that when it comes to money, Laban is never in a hurry to see the potential of it leaving him too quickly.

2. Allow the single person's <u>right to agree to the relationship</u> or not (v.57-59)

v. 58
Such a decision to go required <u>faith</u> on Rebekah's part.

Like the believer's relationship to Jesus Christ, Rebekah would. . .

1) Believe the testimony of a man she had never met.
2) Go to a land from which she would never return.
3) Marry a man she had never seen ("whom having not seen, ye love" – 1 Peter 1:8)

Rebekah felt she was ready for marriage, the time was right, and this young man Isaac was evidently God's choice for her.

What the Bible says about…
Courtship & Marriage

1. Teach your children the basic virtuous characteristics that will <u>prepare</u> them for courtship and marriage.

Teach your teenagers about:

a. Genuine <u>love</u> (I Cor. 13)

b. Accepting God's <u>timing</u> and <u>will</u> (Gen. 29:20; Prov. 3:5-6; Ja. 4:15)

c. The importance of <u>good friendships</u> (I Cor. 15:33)

d. <u>Priorities</u> (Mt. 6:33)
Parents must explain to their teen what to look for in a mate.
--Godliness over glamour
--Personal character is priority over personal appearance
(Prov. 31:30)

e. Design for <u>sex</u> in <u>marriage</u> and standards of <u>moral purity</u>
(I Thess. 4:1--8; Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 7:1-5; Prov. 5:18-21; Ps. 101:3)

2. Teach your children about <u>proper courtship</u>:

What procedure should Christian girls follow in a courtship relationship?

1) Remember you are under the authority of your father until you marry (I Cor. 7:36-38).

2) Before starting to court a young man, meet with your father (whether or not he is a Christian) and share with him your goals for marriage: that yours will be the kind of marriage God wants, and thus be the happiest possible.

3) Agree that any boy who wants to court you must first ask your father for permission.

a) It makes the boy appreciate you more because what is easily gotten is not usually appreciated.

b) It decreases the temptation of the boy to mistreat you. If he thinks you are completely on your own, it increases the risk that he will try something.

c) It proves to the boy that your father loves you.

d) It gives your father a chance to discern the boy's intentions. A woman is more affected by actions than by motives, but a man discerns first the motive.

e) It places the boy under your father's counsel, which is exactly where he should be if the relationship grows into marriage.

4) Agree that anytime a fellow starts talking to you about marriage you will say, *"If you are thinking about marriage, you had better talk to my father."* This is tremendously important because so often talk about marriage is just camouflaged lust.

3. Teach your children about discerning <u>God's will</u>.

How can your children know who is the right one for marriage?

Follow God's principles for courtship:

a. Be submitted and obedient to the advice and discretion of your parents (Eph. 6:1-2).

b. Determine that you will court only <u>Christians</u> (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-18). God forbids the intermarriage of a believer with a non-believer (SEE: Gen. 24:3-4, 28:1-2; Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4; Ezra 9:10-12; Neb. 10:30).

c. Determine that you will strive to <u>be</u> the <u>right one</u>, rather than focusing on meeting the "right one" (Rom. 12:1-2).

d. Be busy doing the general <u>will</u> of God, and He will guide you in the specifics of His will (Phil. 2:12-13; Prov. 3:5-6).

e. Purpose in your heart that you will not <u>defile</u> yourself or <u>defraud</u> the one you court (I Cor. 7:1-2; I Th. 4:6).

f. Decide that the one you marry must <u>enhance</u> your <u>ministry</u>, not diminish or destroy it (Is she a "helpmeet" [Gen. 2:18] or a hindrance?).

g. Yield your plans to God's <u>will</u> in the vital area of courtship and marriage (desire His will above all else) (Mt. 6:33).

h. Wait for God's <u>timing</u> (Eccl. 3:1). Patience is a key virtue. It requires absolute trust in God and His timing.

4. Teach your children what to avoid in a courtship relationship.

a. Avoid the "steady" relationship until the time is right.
(Have several friends and let God bring the right one alone in His time)

b. Avoid situations and circumstances that might involve temptations and trouble (don't be alone in secluded places).

c. Avoid physical involvement (lust can't wait until marriage; but true love can).