

The Christian Home

A lady stood crying as the judge read the sentence which sent her fifteen year old son to prison for five years. "Why?", she cried. "What went wrong your Honor," she sobbed. "Who's responsible for this happening to my son?", she asked. "Ma'am," replied the judge, "you and your husband are responsible. You failed to train the boy in the way that he should go. The blame lies at your feet." How true! The home is responsible for preparing its members for a meaningful life in society.

Everywhere you look there are symptoms of America's problems: alcoholism, drug abuse, premarital sex, abortion, divorce, suicide, pornography, homosexuality, etc. The list must stop here simply because there is not enough room to continue! This is depressing, but we must not ignore it or hope it will go away on its own. It won't! It is here and we must face it and do something about it.

There is only one long range solution to the problem. That is to raise a generation of children that "know Jehovah." To do this, the home must assume its responsibility for training her members in morality and righteousness.

The Bible is the only real source of instruction in responsibility. The word of God places the responsibility for training in the home on the father and mother. The father is the head and, therefore, must take the lead in the home. When he functions, the home functions; when he fails, the home fails. Some of the specific responsibilities of the father and husband are as follows:

First, he must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. This has been God's divine plan since the beginning (Genesis 2:24). "Oneness" is the foundation for a strong home. This "oneness" must be maintained through "thick and thin." It is a great influence; especially as the children view it day by day.

Second, the husband must love the wife (Ephesians 5:25). Love is the "glue" that holds the marriage and home together. The person who said, "The best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother," was right. No one will deny the power of love for good within the home.

Third, he is to be the provider. After his sin with in the garden, Adam was told that he must eat by the sweat of his brow (Genesis 3:19; cf. 1 Timothy 5:8). Many husbands demand that the wife work to help make ends meet so he can slack off, but the Bible says that providing is his responsibility.

Fourth, he must be the head of the house. He is the leader. The ERA, however, would like to reverse this formula set forth by God. But it still stands. God told Eve after the fall, "... *in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee*" (Genesis 3:16). The apostle Paul stresses this truth in Ephesians 5:23-31 and 1 Corinthians 11:3. The man must take the lead in the home.

Fifth, the father is responsible for training his children. In Ephesians 6:4 Paul wrote, "*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" The emphasis here is on education. A good pattern to follow in the home for educating our children in righteousness is Deuteronomy 6:6-9. The word of God must be taught in such a way lest they "*forget the Lord*" (vs. 12).

Many parents train their children to be everything but a servant of God. Some even think that they can turn this responsibility over to someone else. So that means that the church is given the sole job of training Johnny and Susie in righteousness! While the church may assist, it cannot be the only source of instruction. The home is the key. The home is a "seminary." The original meaning of the word is "seed bed." In this "seed bed," which is the heart of family members (Luke 8:11-15), righteousness and morality must be sown.

The wife and mother also has a great responsibility assigned to her in the home by God. Together, she and her husband mold the future of their home and children. She must, just as the husband and father, be faithful to her God-ordained role within the home. Someone once said, "The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world." The wife and mother's influence upon the morality of the family members is stressed in the following points. Some of the traits a wife and mother should be are as follows:

First, she must be in subjection to her husband. In 1 Peter 3:1, Peter wrote, "*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.*" A wife and mother who rebels against this divine injunction is teaching her children to be rebellious, too.

Second, she is to bear children, guide the home, give the enemy no occasion for reproach (1 Timothy 5:14). Many children speak "*reproachfully*" because this is not the case in many homes.

Third, she must dress properly. Paul instructed Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, "*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or*

costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." Many girls dress immodestly because Mom dresses immodestly. Mom dresses immodestly because "Dad" (her husband) lets her.

Fourth, she is to be a marital partner, both physically and spiritually, to her husband. Paul said, *"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency"* (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). The apostle Peter reminds us that we are to consider each other as *"heirs together of the grace of life"* (1 Peter 3:7).

Fifth, she must not be contentious. The wise man wrote, *"It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman"* (Proverbs 21:19). A contentious spirit is contagious!

Sixth, she must not disgrace her husband. Proverbs 12:4 says, *"A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones."* This occurs when she fails to function in her God-ordained role as wife and mother.

Seventh, she must be a person who works on having a meek and quiet spirit. Peter said in 1 Peter 3:3-4, *"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."*

Eighth, she must be *"discreet, chaste, keepsers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed"* (Titus 2:5). There is nothing wrong with women working, but they must understand their place of priority and that is the home.

If morality is to be properly taught in the home, mothers and fathers must live it! No matter what they may say, or how loudly they may shout for respect, the child will follow their actions, which, in most cases, is not in harmony with God's will. Discipline is also needed in most American homes. Spare the rod when Junior is willful and disobedient, and when he grows up he will probably carry one (or a knife or a gun). Not only must morality be taught and demonstrated, it must also be enforced. If we do not begin in the

home, failure is the sure reward. Arnold J. Toynbee said, "Homes are the building blocks of civilization." We must do our "home work"!

A study of people today with a history of crime or other problems shows that in many cases, a person had a "bad" family background. Whatever the environment the child grows up in, that will be the major element in the formation of their nature. A home that does not function as it should will produce children who will fail in their God-ordained function! We will end with an anonymous poem called "The Plastic Years": *They pass so quickly, the days of youth, and the children change so fast, and soon they harden in the mold, and the plastic years are past. Then shape their lives while they are young, this be our prayer, our aim, that every child we meet shall bear the imprint of His name.*

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