

From the Book
Lasting Success
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Chapter One

*Who's Who in the Home
and Parental Unity*

And the rib, which the LORD God had taken
from man, made he a woman, and brought her
unto the man. Genesis 2:22

The Family Is God's Institution:

- "A family is a deeply-rooted tree with branches of different strength all receiving nourishment from an infinite source.
- A family is where truth is learned, character is formed, ethics are practiced and society is preserved.
- A family is where all members contribute and share, cooperate and work and accept their responsibilities toward each other.
- A family is where holidays are celebrated with feasting, birthdays acknowledged with gifts, and thoughts of days gone by are kept alive with fond remembrances.
- A family is where each can find solace and comfort in grief, pleasure and laughter in joy, and kindness and encouragement in daily living.
- A family is a haven of rest, a sanctuary of peace and most of all, a harbor of love."

Author Unknown

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Biblical guidelines for the family stand in total contrast to the secular worldview. The family begins with a man and a woman living faithfully together in marriage for life. They nurture and rear their children to respect God's Word. The educational systems and religions based on secular humanism, liberalism and the new age movement are enemies of the family. Their false teachings strive to dissolve the solidarity of the family. Children become the wards of a paternal and exploitive hierarchy or state.

Happy families are the products of a living faith in God's Word. "Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established" (Proverbs 24:3).

When proceeding according to Biblical guidelines, the husband and wife are committed to each other, and they complement one another. Their roles, equally important, are neither identical nor interchangeable. Together they can accomplish far more than they could on their own.

The marriage that ignores God is in conflict with creation. Some of the greatest problems in the home can be traced to the husband's failure to be a spiritual leader. There is no security when the husband is bossy or, at the other extreme, neutral in all matters. In I Samuel 13:13-14 and 15:28, we can see how a parent's failure caused his children to lose their heritage.

I. The Husband and Wife See Things Differently

When we study the emotional differences between men and women, the advantages God affords in marriage become apparent. Men tend to overlook important matters and to be too optimistic. We could compare the husband to the positive post of a car battery. The wife, on the other hand, with sensitivity to detail, tends to be negative. When we make a direct connection between the negative and positive posts of a battery, sparks fly. The way to avoid this is to have a converter between the two posts which will turn the conflict of strong positives and negatives into constructive power. See chapter two of *Lasting Success*, pages 17 and 18.

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Communication, affection, appreciation, and reverence toward one another in marriage are the products of a Christ-like spirit. Members of a happy family are dedicated to promoting one another's welfare—Ephesians 5:33.

The family is of immeasurable value to happiness and life's fulfillment. This is illustrated by Russell Conwell's *Acre of Diamonds*. The story, set in Persia in the late 1870s, is about a farmer named Ali Hafed.

Ali Hafed owned a very large farm with grain fields and orchards. He was a wealthy and contented man. One day when he was in the marketplace, he was told about an acre of diamonds which was situated between two mountains. Not understanding that emotional highs must be abated, the thought of an acre of diamonds made him feel poor. Driven by this, Ali began a search for the acre of diamonds. To finance the endeavor, he eventually sold the farm that had prospered him and his family. In time, he lost his family and his health. Later, when he was a totally broken man, the news came—others had found the

acre of diamonds. They found the diamonds on the farm he had sold.

Those who are wise and alert do not neglect what really counts. The family is our acre of diamonds!

II. The Husband's Function and Nature

The husband's function is that of leader, protector, and provider. Men have a hero instinct and need to have their role appreciated. Knowing God's Word is the key to leadership in the home. Becoming a good leader in the home provides experience that is important for successful leadership outside the home.

The husband's role and responsibility toward his wife:

1. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge . . ." I Peter 3:7a. The roles of husband and wife are equally important, but each is superior in specific ways. It is important that the husband have empathy for the fact that his wife is, in an emotional and

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physical sense, the weaker vessel. Christ gave His life for the church. We are to care for our wives as Christ cares for the church: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body," Ephesians 5:23. The husband is to assure his wife that she is the most important and loved person on earth.

2. The husband is to encourage his wife to have satisfaction in her role by admiring her work and accomplishments. In a normal marriage, the husband is content and feels loved. This is not always true with the wife. The husband needs to reach beyond his comfort zone, paying special attention to and communicating with his wife. This is an everyday responsibility and means putting aside all thoughts about projects or reading the newspaper. The husband should be interested in knowing how his wife's

day went. He needs to look her in the eye and encourage her to share her thoughts and concerns.

3. The husband is to be the backbone of consistent discipline of his children.
4. The husband is the head of the home, but in the decision process he needs to consult his wife. God is the Boss! The husband is an undershepherd, the final arbitrator of policies and decisions impacting his family.
5. The husband is to help the home atmosphere by being positive and cheerful. He can help by turning the periodic kitchen disaster for his wife into a show of love. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine . . ." Proverbs 17:22a.
6. The Bible says a husband should:
Not leave his wife, though she is unbelieving—
I Corinthians 7:11-12, 14, 16.
Not interfere with his wife's duties to Christ—
Luke 14:26.

The Duties of a Husband to His Wife:

- To be faithful to her—Proverbs 5:19; Malachi 2:14-15
- To comfort her—I Samuel 1:8
- To consult her—Genesis 31:4-7
- To dwell with her for life—Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-9

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- To have only one wife—Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:6-8
- To love her—Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19
- To regard her as himself—Genesis 2:23; Matthew 19:5
- To respect her—I Peter 3:7

III. The Wife's Function and Needs

As the bearer and nurturer of her children, the wife desires a secure home environment. She needs identity and love. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD" (Proverbs 18:22). We are told, "That they [experienced women] may teach the young women to

be sober [wise], to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed [irreverenced]" (Titus 2:4-5).

The demonstration of love between parents is very important to the development of their children. A daughter tends to treat her husband the same way her mother treated her father.

The wife's role and responsibility to her husband:

1. The wife is to promote a dynamic leader. She must be careful to stay under his authority (Genesis 2:18). The wife is to be a "help" suitable for her husband (Genesis 2:18). Proverbs 31:10-31 presents a beautiful picture of the role of a happy wife. The wife's role as a leadership-support person is extremely well defined in the Bible: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22).
2. The wife is to guard her tongue for the safety of the children as well as her own soul. Youngsters find it difficult to see their own sin, but they can spot ours in a minute. Gossip drives children away from Biblical authority, into the arms of Satan.
3. The wife is to support her husband in his work by her attitude. She should be grateful and let him know he is appreciated for his leadership (Ephesians 5:22-24; I Peter 3:1-4).

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4. The wife is to love and respect her husband even if she disagrees with him. She should appeal to him for improvement in private. We all make mistakes. God knew this when He established our respective roles. Wise men learn from the insights their wives share with them. The manner in which husbands and wives submit to their God-given roles is the example that the children will follow.

Good is exemplified: Isaac, Genesis 24:67; Elkanah,
I Samuel 1:3-5.

Bad is exemplified: Solomon, I Kings 11:1; Ahasuerus,
Esther 1:10-11.

5. The Bible says to wives:

Leadership of the husband in the home was established before the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden. God allows no substitutes. A wife should not embarrass her husband by challenging his judgment in public. Not only can this crush a man's incentive to lead, but it also violates God's plan for who's who in the home.

The duties of a wife to her husband:

- To allow him to be the family spokesman in controversial matters—I Corinthians 14:34
- To be faithful to him—I Corinthians 7:3-5, 10
- To be subject to him—Genesis 3:16; Ephesians 5:22-24; I Peter 3:1; I Corinthians 14:34; Titus 2:5
- To bring honor to him—Proverbs 31:23, 28
- To love him—Titus 2:4
- To remain with him for life—Romans 7:2-3
- To secure his confidence—Proverbs 31:11

Wives should be adorned:

- With modesty and sobriety—I Timothy 2:9
- With a meek and quiet spirit—I Peter 3:4-5
- With good works—I Timothy 2:10; 5:10
- With diligence and prudence—Proverbs 31:13-27
- With benevolence to the poor—Proverbs 31:20
- With a sense of duty to unbelieving husbands— I Corinthians 7:13-14, 16; I Peter 3:1-2

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Good is exemplified by Ruth—Ruth 1:4; and Priscilla—Acts 18:2, 26.

Bad is exemplified by Samson's wife—Judges 14:15-17; Michal—II Samuel 6:16; and Jesebel—I Kings 21:25.

IV. There Should Be Unity in the Presence of the Children

God is the Head of the home. God runs the home with the father's help as undershepherd and the mother's help as his assistant.

"For I know him [Abraham], 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 . . ." (Genesis 18:19).

"She looketh well to the ways of her household [parental unity], and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Proverbs 31:27-28).

1. Avoid marital strife around children.
2. Be consistent with each other in child discipline and punish authority-jumping (the child is told "No" by one parent and then goes to the other to get permission).
3. Treat children impartially.
4. Balance jealousy among older children with impartial love, lest the older child's subconscious values become fixed against the parents.
5. Avoid favoritism toward older children; it can give younger children an inferior self-image.
6. Never tolerate a child's disrespect toward the other parent.

TOPICS FOR TEAM DISCUSSION

1. Does your wife know she is loved? (Ephesians 5:25) ---
2. Family devotions / Bible reading / prayer -----
3. Do you communicate and consult with each other? ----

4. Honesty and follow-through with children and others --
5. Church, Sunday school, midweek service attendance ---
6. Husband promoting a cheerful home atmosphere -----
7. Tolerating no abuse or disrespect toward mother -----
8. Parental harmony in the presence of the children -----
9. Knowing children personally, how they differ -----
10. Consistency with rules and discipline of children -----
11. Husband as the backbone for discipline of children -----
12. Are music and literature used wholesome? -----
13. Wholesome entertainment, TV properly limited -----
14. Implementation of a good dating policy for teens -----
15. Importance of Matthew 18 taught and practiced -----
16. Monitor and control of children's associations -----
17. Both parents spending quality time with family -----
18. Demonstration of respect for the role God has given to
authority persons -----
19. Practicing thrift with finances, tithing regularly -----
20. Other topics for team discussion -----

Sharing Ideas – How Can We Improve?

What are some God-honoring things that you as a woman would like to see come to pass?

Are you sensitive to your mate's needs? Are there things you can do that would give her/him renewed joy as a wife/husband?

What do you see that you would consider doing differently if you were the husband/leader?

What would you consider doing differently if you were the wife/helpmeet?

Am I allowing you enough opportunity to be the woman God would have you to be?

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What are some of your thoughts and goals for the children, for the family?

What are some of your fears, hurts?

If God suddenly took either of us to glory, how would the surviving spouse manage financially and otherwise? Are we realistic about things that will impact our future?

Conclusion

It takes work to have a strong, happy family. We need to be sensitive to the roles God has given us as partners in marriage.

If the woman is unsubmitive and the man is strong-willed, there will be conflict in the marriage.

If the woman is unsubmitive and the man is acquiescent, the marriage will also be troubled. This is also a harmful example for the children. The wife's dominance in the home will likely mean trouble in the church.

If the woman is in submission and the man is a thoughtful husband, the woman, the man, and their marriage will be great.

As love and transparency deepen, an appreciation for the unique gifts and roles of each partner grows. The marriage excels!

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul [mind, will, and emotion]: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple [gives us understanding]. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:7-10).