



The HOME

Faithway Baptist Church Adult Sunday School Class Summer 2008

Pastor Estell

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Other Resources Used for This Study

The Duties of Parents by J. C. Ryle (1888)

Christian Living in the Home by Jay Adams (1972)

Strengthening Your Marriage by Wayne Mack (1977)

Formula for Family Unity by Walter & Trudy Fremont (1980)

The Family by John MacArthur (1982)

Your Family, God's Way by Wayne Mack (1991)

Shepherding a Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp (1995)

Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens by Paul Tripp (1997)

The Heart of Anger by Lou Priolo (1997)

What the Bible Says About Child Training by J. Richard Fugate (1998)

The Exemplary Husband by Stuart Scott (2000)

The Excellent Wife by Martha Peace

Lesson 1: Foundational Issues



Before building the superstructure of a building, one must lay a firm foundation upon which to build it. Though the foundation is the least glamorous part of a building, it is the most important part (cf. Matthew 7:24-27 // Luke 6:46-49). In this introductory lesson, we will consider several “foundational issues” that are crucial to building a strong home.

The Purpose for the Home

The most critical question to ask before attempting any task is **WHY**. Why do we do what we do? What is the driving force behind or the motivating factor of our actions? If this question is answered incorrectly¹, we have a flawed foundation right from the start.

The *purpose* for the home is **NOT** human pleasure, happiness, or fulfillment, whether my own or that of my family members.² Human pleasure, happiness, or fulfillment can be experienced through the home, but only as a *by-product* of pursuing the proper purpose for the home.

¹The true answer is not “the knee-jerk, Sunday School” one we may have been programmed to recite, but the one revealed by our attitudes, affections, and actions.

²Other improper purposes might include pragmatism (whatever works), peace (whatever brings tranquility), and prestige (whatever makes me look good). Can you think of others?

What is the proper purpose for the home? The home exists, not to make me or my family members happy, but to make God happy (however, a home that makes God happy is one that will ultimately make its members truly happy). As with anything, the purpose of the home is **to glorify God**. Isaiah 43:7 states that we were created for God's glory (cf. Colossians 1:16). First Corinthians 10:31 says that everything we do is to be done for the glory of God. See also 2 Corinthians 5:9, 15, and Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14. Simply put, the home is to be God-centered, not man-centered.³ Great care must be taken to not make an idol out of the home.

Depravity

Jay Adams, on page 10 of his book on the home states: "The first and most important fact to remember about a truly Christian home is that *sinners live there*." Husbands are depraved. Wives are depraved. Parents are depraved. Yes, even children are depraved (Psalm 51:5, 58:3, Proverbs 22:15).⁴ Don't expect perfection from your spouse. Don't become embittered against your spouse (Colossians 3:19) when (not if) he or she sins against you. Don't be surprised when (not if) your children sin.⁵ Don't excuse your child's sin by denying it, downplaying or minimizing it, defending or justifying it, blaming someone or something (environment, circumstances, etc.) else for it, or ignoring it. Sin in the home must be faced squarely, taken seriously, and dealt with swiftly.

Stewardship

According to Psalm 24:1-2, everything belongs to God by virtue of His creatorship. You belong to God, as does "your" spouse and "your" child(ren). Your family has been graciously loaned to you by God (see Genesis 33:5, 48:9, and Psalm 127:3) to be managed the way He wants it to be managed. The goals I have for my family must be the goals He has for my family. I am not the reason for the existence of my other family members, God is. I will be

³Arguably, the most common form of man-centeredness in the home is a "child-centered" home, a home in which everything revolves around the children. "A child-centered home is one in which a child believes and is allowed to behave as though the entire household, parents, siblings, and even pets exist for one purpose—to please him" (Priolo, p. 24).

⁴"You cannot be successful in child training as long as you imagine that your child is an innocent, sweet cherub who is naturally good" (Fugate, p. 60).

⁵Parents certainly can take a lot of the unnecessary grief out of child raising when, as a matter of course (rather than becoming falsely shocked over the fact), they expect their children to do wrong things at home, at school, and in public" (Adams, p. 12). "Parents should be prepared for and expect their children to disobey" (Fugate, p. 247).

held accountable for my stewardship of my family (Luke 12:42-48, 16:1-2, 1 Corinthians 4:2).

Goals

Paul Tripp, on page 40 of his book on parenting teens, states: “Many parents are more organized, more intentional, better researched, and more goal-oriented when planning their vacations than they are in raising their children.” Every parent has goals for his or her children. Most have not articulated them. Crafting a “family mission statement” (Our family exists to glorify God by . . .) is an excellent idea.⁶ Be a proactive, not a passive, parent. Act, don’t react. Stay focused on the finish line (like Paul in Philippians 3:12-14). Here are some suggested goals for one’s children, as well as some suggested strategies (in parentheses) designed to help parents, by God’s grace, meet them:

- *Salvation* (prayer, presentation of the gospel, training them to obey⁷)
- *Sanctification* (prayer, walk⁸ and talk, local church)
- *Service* (prayer⁹, parental example, personal involvement, exposure to vocational ministry and vocational ministers)
- *Separation* (parentally-controlled exposure to any source that would turn their hearts away from God and communicate the message that life without God is normal, such as certain friends, media, public education system, etc.)¹⁰

⁶A suggested family mission statement: Our family exists to glorify God by making and maturing disciples through the ministry of His Word through our local church.

⁷Since the gospel is something to be obeyed (salvation is not an *option*, but an *obligation*; not only *should* we be saved, we *must* be saved—see Acts 17:30, 2 Thessalonians 1:8, and 1 Peter 4:17), our failure as parents to train our children to obey us may very well contribute to their eternal damnation. A sobering thought. The stakes are high. More will be said regarding this thought in Lesson 5.

⁸“Your talk talks and your walk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks.” “More is caught than taught.” “Learning is more a matter of *infection* than it is *injection*.” “Actions speak louder than words.” “What you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say.” “A man’s life is always more forcible than his speech; when men take stock of him they reckon his deeds as pounds and his words as pence” (Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, p. 225).

⁹As commanded in Matthew 9:38.

¹⁰Separation is not just a matter of separation from sin, but also separation to God. It is not only a matter of the absence of vice, but also the presence of virtue. The goal is not just to

- “*Sold Out*” (parental example, exposure to individuals who are)

Faith¹¹

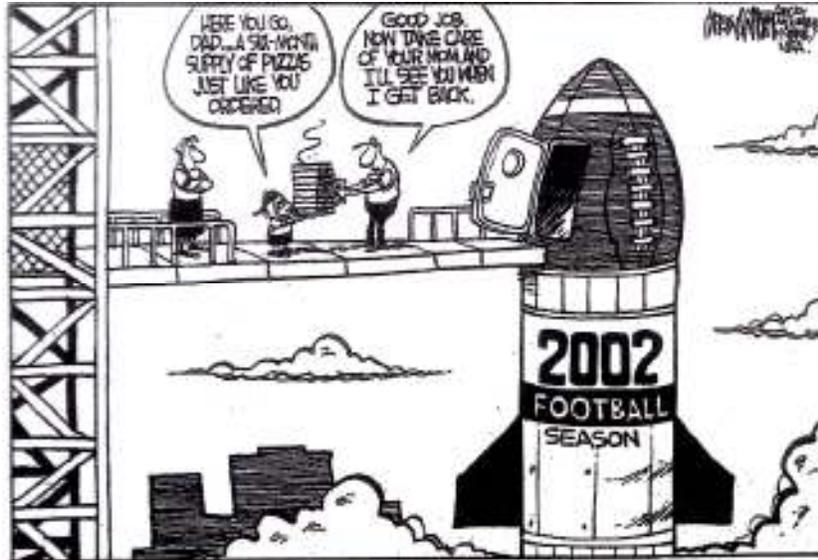
Proper (i.e., Biblical) parenting takes courage. Forces within (our own sin nature) and without (Satan and the world) are against us. Faith simply means taking God at His Word, trusting that He knows best. Using the Bible as your “parenting playbook” puts you at odds with the overwhelming majority of worldlings (and, sometimes, even other believers).¹² By faith, we must persevere, pressing on in spite of peer pressure. What ultimately matters is pleasing God/making Him happy. This is the most foundational of the foundational issues regarding the home.

have “good” kids, but Godly ones. Paul David Tripp, on page 199 of his book on parenting teens, writes: “What a goal for our teenagers (and us)! Not that they would agree to go to church with us, not that they would be drug- and sex-free, not that they would get a job and do fairly well in school. These goals are not high enough . . . !”

¹¹Speaking of the need for faith in regards to corporal discipline, Tedd Tripp (p. 131) states: “The use of the rod is an act of faith. God has mandated its use. The parent obeys, not because he perfectly understands how it works, but because God has commanded it. The use of the rod is a profound expression of confidence in God’s wisdom and the excellency of His counsel.”

¹² “A true Christian must be no slave to fashion, if he would train his child for heaven. He must not be content to do things merely because they are the custom of the world; to teach them and instruct them in certain ways, merely because it is usual; to allow them to read books of a questionable sort, merely because everybody else reads them; to let them form habits of a doubtful tendency, merely because they are the habits of the day. He must train with an eye to his children’s souls. He must not be ashamed to hear his training called singular and strange. What if it is? The time is short, —the fashion of this world passeth away. He that has trained his children for heaven, rather than for earth, —for God, rather than for man, —he is the parent that will be called wise at last” (Ryle, p. 9).

Lesson 2: The Role of the Husband



Every successful athletic team has what are called “role players” (also known as “the supporting cast”), players who complement the “star” of the team, performing one or more specialized tasks. When it comes to the family, there is no “star” player (God is the “star”); every member is a role player. Every member is equal in *worth*, though assigned to do different *work*. The player with the most crucial role is the husband/father. This lesson focuses on the role of the husband (in relation to his wife), focusing specifically on his role as his wife’s lover, leader, protector, provider, and companion.

The Husband as His Wife’s Lover

The most significant passage in Scripture concerning the role of the husband is found in Ephesians 5:25-33a. Three times in this passage (verses 25, 28, and 33a) the husband is commanded to love his wife (cf. Colossians 3:19).¹³ This is not only a command, but it is also an unconditional command; in other words, a husband is to love his wife regardless of her merit or demerit (Christ loved us in spite of our demerit, Romans 5:6, 8, and 10). Such love is to rise to the level of a husband’s love for himself (verses 28-29 and 33a). Even more staggering, it is to rise to the level of Christ’s love for the church (verse 25)! Therefore, it is to be a self-sacrificial love (verse 25; cf. John 15:13, Galatians 2:20, and

¹³In Titus 2:4, the wife is commanded to love her husband.

Ephesians 5:2), willing not only to die for one's wife, but, even more so, to live for her (by dying daily to self). Love is doing what is best for another. A husband's love for his wife must be shown not only in words, but also in actions (1 John 3:18). See 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 for a description of love.

The Husband as His Wife's Leader

Not only does Ephesians 5 teach that a husband is to be his wife's lover, but also her leader. Verse 23 states that "the husband is the head of the wife" (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:3). As with love, a husband's leadership is to rise to the level of Christ's leadership over the church (verse 23). Christ was a "servant-leader" (see especially Luke 22:24-27 and John 13:1-17¹⁴). Leadership means taking the lead. This includes being in charge and being aware of what is going on in the home (Adams, p. 105). "Many times a husband is a mere spectator in his marriage; he watches and reacts to what happens, but he doesn't control what is happening" (Fremont, p. 50). A good leader is both "tough" and "tender"; he has a "tough hide" and a "tender heart."

The Husband as His Wife's Protector

In 1 Peter 3:7, Peter says that wives are "weaker" ("weaker," a relative term, not "weak," an absolute term) than their husbands. Being physically stronger than his wife, the husband must physically protect her. Physical (as well as verbal) abuse in the home is unconscionable. Positionally (and the point of 1 Peter 3:7 in its context), a wife is weaker than her husband by virtue of her vulnerable position under the headship of her husband.¹⁵ The husband must not abuse this authority.

The Husband as His Wife's Provider

Failure to provide one's family with the necessities of life (food, shelter, clothing, etc.) is condemned in the strongest of terms in 1 Timothy 5:8. Though this text specifically speaks of material needs, the principle of provision also includes providing for the emotional and spiritual needs of one's wife.

¹⁴"The emblem of leadership is not a throne or a club but a big towel and a basin" (Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage*, p. 33).

¹⁵"The wife may be considered weak because of her role as a wife. She, by marrying, has accepted a position where she submits herself to her husband. Such a position is vulnerable, open to exploitation. The husband is commanded not to take advantage of the woman's vows of submission" (Susan Foh, quoted in D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter*, p. 206).

The Husband as His Wife's Companion

According to such passages as Proverbs 2:17 and Malachi 2:14, marriage may be defined as a “covenant of companionship” (Jay Adams, *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*, p. 8). See also Genesis 2:18. According to one survey of wives, companionship was their number one concern in marriage (Fremont, p. 30). Companionship implies communication. It also implies being together (more than just being physically in one another's presence). Men who make their wives virtual widows by extended and excessive absences (due to work, hunting, fishing, golfing, watching football, etc.) are missing the mark.¹⁶ The husband-wife relationship takes precedence over every other human relationship (including the parent-child relationship—see Genesis 2:24); a husband's best friend must be his wife.

“The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved”

(Matthew Henry).

¹⁶“Peter commands husbands to dwell or live with their wives (1 Pet 3:7). No husband is fulfilling his God-given responsibility to his wife who does not delight in and arrange for frequent and regular companionship with her” (Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage*, p. 34).

Lesson 3: The Role of the Wife



In relation to her husband, a wife is given four primary responsibilities in Scripture: love him, submit to him, respect him, and support him.

Love Her Husband

Just as husbands are commanded to love their wives (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33a, and Colossians 3:19), so wives are commanded to love their husbands (Titus 2:4). A simple definition of love is doing what's best for someone else. A Scriptural description of love is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Love is not primarily a feeling.¹⁷ Rather, it is a choice; it is a commitment; it is an action; it is an act of the will; it is something you “jump” into rather than “fall” into. Thus, you are to choose to love whether you feel like it or not. A wife is to love her husband regardless of her husband's merit. Just as Christ loved us in spite of our demerit (Romans 5:6, 8, and 10), so we are to love our spouse in spite of his or her demerit (see Matthew 5:43-48, John 15:12, Ephesians 5:1-2, 25, and 1 John 4:11 and 19). A wife's aim should be to make her hubby happy, to “do him good and not evil all the days of her life” (Proverbs 31:12).

¹⁷It has been said that romantic “love” normally lasts anywhere from 8 months to 3 years.

Submit¹⁸ to Her Husband

Contrary to our culture¹⁹ and the woman's post-Fall, sinful disposition (Genesis 3:16), God commands wives to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, 1 Timothy 2:11, Titus 2:5²⁰, and 1 Peter 3:1 and 5-6). Because such submission is commanded, it is "not to be based upon the way her husband treats her. Nor is it to be conditioned by the husband's abilities, talents, wisdom, education, or spiritual state" (Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage*, p. 18). Submission of wives to husbands is a serious matter (see Ephesians 5:22 and Titus 2:5). The secret to submission is being Spirit-filled, i.e., controlled by the Holy Spirit of God through the Word of God (compare Ephesians 5:18-24 with Colossians 3:16-18). The Greek verb translated "submit" in the New Testament is *hupotasso*, a compound consisting of the prefix *hupo*, meaning "under," and the verb *tasso*, meaning "to put" or "place." Thus, submission is putting or placing oneself under the authority of another. Submission ≠ inferiority. Inequality of *work* does not imply inequality of *worth* (see especially 1 Corinthians 11:3, as well as Galatians 3:28 and 1 Peter 3:7's "heirs together"). Though God the Son is equal in essence with the God the Father (John 10:30), He humbly submitted to the Father (Philippians 2:6-8; cf. John 14:28). Submission includes both *action* (what you do) and *attitude* (why you do it and how you do it). While the role of the husband may be summarized with the words "loving leadership," the role of the wife may be summarized with the words "sweet submission." Rather than submitting to their husbands, some wives try to control them by such things as scheduling, spending, sex, sickness, sobbing, spirituality, silence, and threats, such as divorce or suicide (Fremont, pp. 41-43). Though the Bible does teach that wives must submit to their husbands, It does not teach "doormat theology" (Peace, p. 137). As a general rule, wives are to submit to their husbands "in every thing" (Ephesians 5:24). However, if a husband commands his wife to violate Scripture, whether commanding her to do something God prohibits or forbidding her to do something God prescribes, a wife must respectfully go against her husband's wishes (see Acts 5:29). Though the wife is in a vulnerable position, she is not without recourse. In chapter 14 of her book, *The Excellent Wife*, Martha Peace gives 8 resources for the wife's protection: communicate biblically, overcome evil with good, make a biblical appeal, give a biblical reproof, biblically respond to foolish demands, seek godly counsel,

¹⁸ According to John Piper, submission is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts.

¹⁹R. Kent Hughes, in his commentary on Ephesians, calls submission "an incendiary word in today's western culture" (*Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, p. 181).

²⁰ The Greek verb translated "obedient" in this verse is in the middle voice, indicative of the fact that a wife must choose to submit of her own volition (cf. Colossian 3:18's "submit yourselves," as well as Ephesians 5:21-22).

biblically follow the steps of church discipline, and biblically involve the governing authorities.

Respect Her Husband

According to Ephesians 5:33b and 1 Peter 3:2, a wife is to respect her husband. Since this is a command, it is to be done regardless of merit. In other words, a wife must honor her husband's *position*, regardless of what he is as a *person*. Martha Peace (p. 115) asks wives this penetrating question: "Do you treat your husband in private as respectfully as you do your pastor, your neighbor, or your friends in public?"

Support Her Husband

From the very beginning, it was God's intention that a wife be her husband's "help meet" (Genesis 2:18, 20; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:9), or a helper²¹ suitable for him. One of the qualities for which the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is commended is the fact that "her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land" (verse 23). The implication of this statement is that she is the reason he is so (behind every great man is a great woman). The wife is to *complete*, not *compete with* her husband (Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage*, p. 29). A wife is to be the wind beneath her husband's wings.

(continued on next page)

²¹ Lest it be thought that this role of "helper" is a demeaning one, consider the fact that the same Hebrew word and its derivatives are used of God Himself throughout the Old Testament (see Exodus 18:4, Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29, 1 Samuel 7:12, and Psalm 20:2, 33:20, 46:1, 115:9-11, 124:8 and 146:5).

Should a Mother Work Outside the Home?

The Scriptures appear to discourage it. See, for example, 1 Timothy 5:14's "guide the house" and Titus 2:5's "keepers at home" (literally "workers at home"²²). Some have used the Proverbs 31 woman as justification for a mother working outside the home. However, a careful reading of this text seems to indicate that her work is home based. Minimally, the aforementioned Scriptures seem to be laying down the principle that anything a woman does (whether employment, hobby, etc.) that hinders her ability to fulfill her responsibilities at home (to her husband and children) are to be avoided.²³ Other issues to consider, besides biblical ones, include psychological impact upon any children in the home²⁴, financial benefit²⁵ (usually a lot less than one might think²⁶), etc. Before deciding to have the mother work outside the home, several questions should be asked and answered: Is it biblically permissible? Is it necessary? And is it worth it (financially, psychologically, spiritually, etc.)?

²²Commenting on this word on page 436 of his commentary on Titus, D. Edmond Hiebert says it encompasses "the many domestic activities of the housewife that she must willingly accept as part of her position as queen of the home."

²³ "Any woman who makes career status or financial advantage a higher priority in her life than the welfare of her marriage, children, or home transgresses Scripture" (Bryan Chapell, pp. 330-331 of his commentary on Titus).

²⁴"Psychological tests have shown that children who grow up in homes where the mother works are much more insecure than children whose mother is home" (MacArthur, p. 34).

²⁵By "financial benefit," I do not mean the mother working simply to allow for a higher level of living (nicer car, nicer home, etc.), which, when it really comes down to it, is far too often the case. "If a family is not able to live on the husband's salary, they may be living beyond their God-intended means" (MacArthur, p. 37).

²⁶"Many times, if a couple did an honest appraisal of the wife's income, and looked at how much they spent on transportation, child care, taxes, clothing, lunches out, dinners out, and increased grocery bills due to buying prepared foods, the couple would likely see that they are actually losing money" (Peace, p. 73).

Lesson 4: The Role of the Parent



The Bible encourages (Psalm 127:3-5), if not expects (Genesis 1:28), married couples to have children.²⁷ In relation to their children, parents are given six primary responsibilities in Scripture: love them, lead them, teach them, restrain and train them, protect them, and provide for them.

Love Them

Mothers are commanded to love their children in Titus 2:4 (though fathers are not explicitly commanded to do so in Scripture, it is reasonably safe to assume that they, too, are obligated to love their children). Love means doing what is best for someone else. What is best for our children is not necessarily what they want, nor necessarily what we want, but what God wants (children do not belong to themselves, nor to their parents, but to God—see under “Stewardship” in Lesson 1). Rather than giving our children what we or they want, we must give them what God says they need. For example, we may not want to spank our children, nor may our children want to receive a spanking, but God (whose perspective is, unlike ours, neither finite nor fallen) says that this is what they need, and refusal to spank

²⁷The Puritans taught that there were 3 purposes for marriage: children, chastity, and companionship (J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, p. 261). They readily recognized, however, that God providentially hindered some married couples from bearing children.

a child means a parent does not truly love his child (Proverbs 13:24; cf. Proverbs 3:11-12, Hebrews 12:6, Revelation 3:19a).²⁸ Read Proverbs 19:18²⁹ and 23:13-14³⁰ and ask yourself if withholding corporal discipline is in your child's best interests. The sentiment, "I love my child too much to spank him" is simply not true.³¹ Here's another example: A child may not want to go to church, but God says that a child needs to go to church (Hebrews 10:25); therefore, a parent must bring (not send) his child to church (children may not want to go to school, the doctor, or the dentist either, but no parent in his right mind would let his child have a choice in the matter).³² The key question is: Is this what's best for my child, as God defines it?

Lead Them

The responsibility to lead children in the home falls primarily on the father's shoulders (Genesis 18:19, Joshua 24:15, Ephesians 6:4//Colossians 3:21, 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12). Leading is primarily done through example.³³ "Do as I do, as well as do as I say."

²⁸Fugate (p. 33) calls permissiveness in parenting "passive abuse."

²⁹Based on a literal rendering of the last half of Proverbs 19:18 ("and let not thy soul put him to death"), Tedd Tripp (p. 55) writes, "The discipline of a child is a parent refusing to be a willing party to his child's death (Proverbs 19:18)."

³⁰"The rod is given for this extremity. 'Punish him [a child] with a rod and save his soul from death.' (Proverbs 23:14) Your children's souls are in danger of death—spiritual death. Your task is to rescue your children from death. Faithful and timely use of the rod is the means of rescue" (Tedd Tripp, p. 129).

³¹"Let's face the truth that most parents do not evade training their children properly because they 'love' them so much. Rather, we parents from previously untrained generations are self-centered, lazy, and lack the character to handle conflict with our children. We will stand by and allow our children to raise themselves, rather than sacrifice our time or our emotions for their benefit—i.e., to love them" (Fugate, p. 14).

³²"Do not allow them to grow up with a habit of making vain excuses for not coming. Give them plainly to understand, that so long as they are under your roof it is the rule of your house for every one in health to honour the Lord's house upon the Lord's day, and that you reckon the Sabbath-breaker to be a murderer of his own soul" (Ryle, p. 15).

³³"Archbishop Tillotson made a wise remark when he said, 'To give children good instruction, and a bad example, is but beckoning to them with the head to show them the way to heaven, while we take them by the hand and lead them in the way to hell'" (Ryle, pp. 30-31).

Teach Them³⁴

Parental instruction of children is explicitly taught in Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and implicitly so in Proverbs 1:8 and 6:20. Such instruction should take place both formally (“family devotions”) and informally (see Deuteronomy 6:7). In other words, it should be both structured and spontaneous (Mack, *Your Family, God’s Way*, p. 42). Parents teach with their lips, but more so with their lives (see footnote 8). Learning and living the Truth are prerequisites to teaching It to your children (see Deuteronomy 6:6-7, as well as Ezra 7:10). The key question is: What am I teaching my child by doing (or not doing) this? Everything a parent says (including how it is said) and does (including the spirit in which it is done) in the presence of a child communicates a message.

Restrain and Train Them

Because children are sinners, their sin natures (and the sinful actions that flow from such natures) must be restrained by their parents.³⁵ This is done both verbally (reproof/rebuke³⁶) and physically (the rod), speaking and spanking. See Proverbs 29:15a. Both concepts are also found in Ephesians 6:4 (“nurture and admonition”). Restraining makes training possible. The focus of the early years of child rearing should primarily be on restraining³⁷, while the focus of the latter years should primarily be on training.³⁸ Second Timothy 3:16 gives a pattern: “doctrine” (what is right) ⇨ “reproof” (what isn’t right) ⇨ “correction” (how to get right) ⇨ “instruction in righteousness” (how to stay right).³⁹

³⁴“The education of children for God is the most important business done on earth. ... [E]very parent especially ought to feel, every hour of the day, that next to making his own calling and election sure, this is the end for which he is kept alive by God—this is his task on earth” (Robert Dabney).

³⁵“... [T]he child’s heart is a battlefield. If you don’t subdue it, it will destroy the child and wreak havoc on society” (Gerald Priest). Tragically, both Eli (see 1 Samuel 3:11-13) and David (see 1 Kings 1:6) failed to restrain their children, reaping what they sowed.

³⁶According to Romans 15:14, effectiveness in this regard (“able also to admonish”) is in direct proportion to one’s *character* (“full of goodness”) and to one’s *comprehension* of Scripture (“filled with all knowledge”).

³⁷“Parents must act as the external control over a child while he is developing his own internal controls” (Fugate, p. 79).

³⁸Someone has identified the ages of newborn-12 as the *control* phase; ages 13-19 as the *coach* phase; and age 20 and beyond as the *companion* phase.

³⁹Based on the subject matter of this verse, it is safe to surmise that a parent’s ability to successfully train his child will be in direct proportion to the parent’s knowledge of Scripture.

Training is not so much a matter of *telling* a child what to do, as it is *showing* a child what to do.

Protect Them

While a parent must certainly protect his child from physical threats, he must especially protect his child from spiritual threats. Proverbs 4:23 commands us to diligently guard our hearts, because the influences we allow to invade our hearts will shape us for good or evil. To the degree that a child does not have the mental, emotional, or spiritual capacity to guard his heart, his parents must do so for him.⁴⁰ Parents must be ever vigilant about the influences that invade the minds of their children through the ear and eye gates. The overwhelming majority of the messages communicated by modern media outlets (TV, magazines, movies, music, Internet, etc.), as well as by our public education system (from start to finish), teach the phony philosophy that life without God is normal.

Provide for Them

According to 1 Timothy 5:8, parents are obligated to provide their children with the necessities of life (food, shelter, clothing, medical care, etc.). Parents must also provide for the immaterial (emotional, spiritual, etc.) needs of their children. Perhaps the most important thing a parent can give a child is time, both quality time and quantity time.⁴¹

⁴⁰“Remember, children are born with a decided bias towards evil, and therefore if you let them choose for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong ... If, then, you would deal wisely with your child, you must not leave him to the guidance of his own will. Think for him, judge for him, act for him, just as you would for one weak and blind; but for pity’s sake, give him not up to his own wayward tastes and inclinations. It must not be *his* likings and wishes that are consulted. He knows not yet what is good for his mind and soul, any more than what is good for his body” (Ryle, p. 3).

⁴¹According to one survey, the average father spends an average of 37 seconds per day with his child (R. Kent Hughes, *Colossians & Philemon: The Supremacy of Christ*, p. 127).

Lesson 5: The Role of the Child



In relation to their parents, children are given two primary responsibilities in Scripture: obey them and honor them (Ephesians 6:1-3; cf. 1 Timothy 3:4). Parents must teach and train their children to do so.⁴²

Obey

Both Ephesians 6:1 and its parallel passage, Colossians 3:20 command children to obey their parents.⁴³ Such obedience is right (Ephesians 6:1), Christ-like (Luke 2:51), pleasing to God (Colossians 3:20), part of a child's overall obedience to the Lord (Ephesians 6:1), and, as a general rule, holds until the child marries and/or moves out. God takes this responsibility very seriously (see Deuteronomy 21:18-21, Romans 1:30, and 2 Timothy 3:2). The Greek verb translated "obey" in Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20 is *hupakouo*, which literally

⁴²Remember, parents, that we teach and train our children primarily through our example. Thus, if we expect our children to obey and honor us, our response to those in authority over us (the boss at work, the pastor at church, government officials, etc.) must not be characterized by disobedience and disrespect. "Parents who are themselves in the sin of rebellion against God, His Word, or His established system of laws and authority, are likely to produce rebellious children. They will have great difficulty in setting and enforcing standards with their children since they are rebels themselves" (Fugate, p. 181).

⁴³ Children are to obey their parents, not vice versa. After visiting America, the Duke of Windsor was once asked what most impressed him about America. He replied, "The way American parents obey their children."

means “to listen under” (the Greek preposition *hupo*, meaning “under” + the Greek verb *akouo*, meaning “to listen”). A child is responsible to listen to and place himself under parental directives. In order to be truly obedient to a parental directive, a child must obey

...

- **Quickly.** Anything other than first-time obedience is disobedience. Children are to “obey right away” or “obey without delay”; a “slow obey is no obey.” A child must not be allowed to protest/challenge/question a parental directive until after he has obeyed it⁴⁴ and only then with parental permission and a submissive, respectful spirit. “When a child has been trained to ask the reason for every instruction, this insubordinate habit must be broken. If you believe it is beneficial to explain a particular instruction, always explain *after* requiring obedience” (Fugate, pp. 224-225). Unfortunately, many parents train their children to obey them the second, third, etc. time they’re told (through increase in voice volume or pitch, use of child’s full name, threat of spanking, counting to 3, etc.). “The most subtle form of passive rebellion is to wait to obey until just before getting into trouble. A child considers that it is a victory of his own will over the will of his parents when he does not obey until he himself decides to do so” (Fugate, pp. 139-140).
- **Completely.** “Often children will assert their own will when carrying out instructions by doing it their own way. They only partially follow the instructions and then improvise by adding something or doing it however they want” (Fugate, p. 140). Parents need to be clear and thorough in their instructions so that there is no misunderstanding on their child’s part. With smaller children, this often requires getting down on their level, looking them in the eye, making them look you in the eye, and making them repeat your instructions back to you.
- **Cheerfully.** Children must not only do obedient *actions*, but also have submissive *attitudes* while doing such actions. You may have heard about the little boy who, when made to sit down, muttered under his breath, “I’m still standing on the inside.” Our focus as parents must not ultimately be changing our child’s behavior, but changing his or her heart.⁴⁵ Our child’s rebellious will must be broken.⁴⁶

⁴⁴The only exception to this rule is the “appeal.” If appropriate, a child may respectfully ask his parent, “May I appeal?” For a thorough discussion of this concept, see chapter 12 of Priolo’s book.

⁴⁵“You have not done enough if you simply teach your child simply *how to behave as a Christian*. Your responsibility as a Christian parent is to teach your child *how to think and be*

As a general rule, children are to obey their parents “in all things” (Colossians 3:20). However, if a parent commands a child to violate Scripture, whether commanding the child to do something God prohibits or forbidding the child to do something God prescribes, the child must respectfully go against his parent’s wishes (see Acts 5:29).

Parents, training our children to obey us is crucial to both their physical and spiritual well-being. If we don’t train our children to obey us, what makes us think they will obey other authorities in their lives, including God⁴⁷? Will a child trained to rebel against parental authority be likely to obey God’s command to repent and be saved (Acts 5:32, 6:7, 17:30, Romans 1:5, 2:8, 16:26, 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 1 Peter 4:17, and 1 John 3:23)? “Teach them to obey while young, or else they will be fretting against God all their lives long, and wear themselves out with the vain idea of being independent of His control” (Ryle, p. 20).

Parents, train your children to obey you.⁴⁸

motivated as a Christian, for only thereby can change in behavior be efficacious to the glory of God” (Priolo, p. 95; emphasis his).

⁴⁶“At whatever point a child chooses to rebel, his parents must utilize sufficient force to put down the revolt immediately” (Fugate, pp. 141-142). “Parents can neither avoid the problem of a child’s rebellion nor attempt to negotiate with it. Rebellion must be conquered” (Fugate, p. 145).

⁴⁷In his book on the Puritans entitled *A Quest for Godliness*, J. I. Packer states: “Parents were called to teach their children obedience to God and to themselves (the Puritans did not expect to see the first without the second)” (p. 272). “If a child rebels against his parents, he will eventually rebel against civil and divine authority. Early training in obedience prepares the child to obey God and all authority God will place over him later” (Fremont, p. 112). “You must not wonder that men refuse to obey their Father which is in heaven, if you allow them, when children, to disobey their father who is upon earth” (Ryle, p. 21).

⁴⁸“You inevitably train your children in obedience. You may train them to obey only after you’ve yelled, pleaded or threatened. You may train them to obey only when they wish to. You may not train them to obey at all. Even that is a type of training in obedience. When your directives are met by a discourse about why what you have asked is not fair, your children are not obeying. When you are met with excuses or explanations they are not obeying. When they refuse to respond at once, they are not obeying. Submission to authority means that they obey without delay, excuse or challenge. It is easy to think unclearly about obedience. When you say to your child, ‘Dear, I want you to go to bed now,’ there is only one appropriate response. It is not, ‘I’ll go after I finish coloring this page.’ It is not, ‘Why do I always have to go to bed early?’ It is not to ignore you entirely. There is only one obedient response. It is to go to bed without delay. If you accept any other response, you are training your children to disobey” (Tedd Tripp, p. 161).

Honor

God also commands children to honor their parents (Exodus 20:12a//Deuteronomy 5:16a, Ephesians 6:2a; cf. Mark 7:9-13), taking this responsibility very seriously, as well (see Exodus 21:15 and 17, and Proverbs 30:17). To honor one's parents not only involves the passive absence of cursing, but also the active presence of blessing (Proverbs 30:11). Honoring one's parents brings with it God's special blessing, both quality of life and quantity of life (Exodus 20:12b//Deuteronomy 5:16b and Ephesians 6:2b-3; cf. Proverbs 4:10).⁴⁹ While the responsibility to obey one's parents ends when a child marries and/or moves out of the home, the responsibility to honor one's parents never does. This honor includes taking care of one's parents, especially in their old age (1 Timothy 5:4). "If a child is going to honor his parents, it will be the result of two things. 1) The parent must train him to do so. 2) The parent must be honorable in his conduct and demeanor" (Tedd Tripp, p. 158). Parents should never allow their children to treat them disrespectfully (through words, body language, etc.).

Parents, train your children to honor you.

⁴⁹In the Old Testament theocratic arrangement, the promise of well-being and long life for honoring one's parents was virtually an absolute one. Though the theocracy is no longer in effect today, the promise still applies in principle. All other things being equal, a (Christian) child who honors his (Christian) parents will tend to avoid situations, substances (alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, etc.), activities, relationships, etc. that might bring hardship and/or premature death. As John Eadie (quoted in Homer Kent, *Ephesians: The Glory of the Church*, p. 108) states: "Filial obedience, under God's blessing, prolongs life, for it implies the possession of principles of restraint, sobriety, and industry, which secure a lengthened existence."

Lesson 6: Forgiveness



“The great English war hero Field Marshal Montgomery once said to his young troops: ‘Gentlemen, don’t even think about marriage until you have mastered the art of warfare!’” (MacArthur, p. 53). In a similar vein, perhaps you’ve heard of the church organist who played “The Fight is On” as the newly-married couple made their way down the aisle during the recessional. In all seriousness, discord in the home is not a laughing matter. Many a home has been destroyed by it. The next three lessons will examine three of the gravest dangers to a harmonious home.

One of the most potent weapons Satan uses to destroy a home is an unforgiving spirit. In the introductory lesson to this series, one of the foundational issues discussed was the reality of sin in the home. Because each member of the home is a sinner, it is inevitable that each member will offend/wrong/sin against the others. These offenses are like grenades, prone to detonate if not handled carefully and correctly. Following are several biblical texts and guidelines from these texts to help us defuse the destructive potential of sins committed against us by fellow family members.

- Text:** Ecclesiastes 7:21
Guideline: Have a “blind eye” and a “deaf ear” (Spurgeon’s terminology).⁵⁰ See no evil and hear no evil. It was Ben Franklin who once said that one should have his or her eyes wide open prior to marriage and half shut after, rather than vice versa.
- Text:** Proverbs 19:11
Guideline: Let it pass/overlook it. If unable to do so, initiate the reconciliation process (Matthew 18:15).⁵¹
- Texts:** Proverbs 10:12⁵² and 17:9
Guideline: Cover it. Bury it; don’t broadcast it. After burying it, don’t dig it up again/exhume it (Proverbs 16:27).
- Texts:** Ephesians 4:26, 31, Colossians 3:19⁵³, Hebrews 12:15
Guidelines: Don’t become angry or bitter. If you do, resolve it immediately; keep short accounts.⁵⁴ Failure to respond properly at critical “checkpoints” after your spouse sins against you will ultimately lead to marital breakdown: offence (checkpoint) ⇒ bitterness/anger/resentment begins to take root in one’s spirit (checkpoint) ⇒ hatred develops (checkpoint) ⇒ marital breakdown (divorce, adultery, abuse, etc.).

⁵⁰ “... I have one blind eye and one deaf ear, and they are the best eye and ear I have” (C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, p. 335).

⁵¹ In this regard, Jay Adams (*From Forgiven to Forgiving*, p. 18) lays down the following principle: “The one with the sore toes goes because he’s the one who always knows.”

⁵² Commenting on this verse, David Hubbard (“Proverbs” in *The Communicator’s Commentary*, pp. 261-262) writes: “Like a stubborn dog, hatred digs up every possible bone of contention, worries it with relish, parades it around in its snarling snout, and drops it messily on the carpet where it causes nothing but consternation. Love, on the other hand, like a prudent squirrel, hides the morsels of scandal in a secret place where the light of exposure never reaches.”

⁵³“Bitterness, if not eliminated, can push a man into a ‘devil set-up’ with a strange woman” (Fremont, p. 62).

⁵⁴“Interpersonal problems must be handled on a daily basis so that they do not build up and abscess” (Adams, p. 31).

Notice how hatred in the heart of Cain (Genesis 4:5b-6) left unchecked (Genesis 4:7) led to the murder of Abel (Genesis 4:8).

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:5d

Guideline: Don't record it. To forgive means to promise to forget by not bringing it up again⁵⁵ to God, yourself, others, or the one forgiven (Isaiah 43:25 and Jeremiah 31:34) and by not holding it against the one forgiven.⁵⁶

Texts: Matthew 18:21-35⁵⁷, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13

Guideline: Forgive as you have been forgiven.⁵⁸ Does the offender deserve to be forgiven? No. However, forgiveness is not about merit, but about mercy. In obedience to God's command to forgive (Luke 17:3-4) and in humble recognition that God has mercifully forgiven us, we humbly and mercifully forgive others.⁵⁹ As Ken Sande has said (cited in *When Sinners Say, "I Do"* by Dave Harvey, p. 108): "... [F]orgiveness requires that you absorb certain effects of another person's sins and you release that person from liability to punishment. This is precisely what Christ accomplished on Calvary."

⁵⁵ By not bringing it up again, one can actually allow the old adage, "forgive and forget" to become a reality. As Jay Adams (*From Forgiven to Forgiving*, p. 121) writes: "When one no longer brings up a matter to an offender, to anyone else, or even to himself, according to the promise 'not to remember,' he discovers that forgetting occurs more rapidly and more completely than he expected."

⁵⁶ Someone has said that forgiveness is "when the injured person chooses to accept his angry feelings, bear the burden of them personally, find release through confession and prayer, and set the other person free."

⁵⁷ The relationship of the dollar amounts in this parable have been calculated by Jay Adams (*From Forgiven to Forgiving*, p. 45) as twenty compared to ten million.

⁵⁸ The title of Jay Adams' book, *From Forgiven to Forgiving* communicates this very principle.

⁵⁹ Forgiveness does not, however, eliminate the need for restitution (see the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19). While the sin may be forgiven, the consequences of the sin must still be faced (consider, for example, the consequences David suffered following his sin with Bathsheba).

Lesson 7: Finances



Several forces threaten to harm the home. The previous lesson focused on the threat posed by the failure to forgive one's fellow family members. The next lesson will focus on the threat posed by the failure to be faithful to one's spouse. The focus of this lesson is the threat posed by money.⁶⁰

The Threat of Excessive Debt

The Bible does not condemn indebtedness per se, but the failure to pay off indebtedness (Psalm 37:21a). The Bible does, however, discourage excessive or unmanageable indebtedness (Proverbs 22:7). A good goal in this regard is seeking to avoid indebtedness on depreciating items.⁶¹

The primary reason why excessive debt is a threat to the home is because it puts pressure on the wife/mother to work and/or the husband to work excessively to pay off indebtedness, thus depriving spouses of time needed with each other (in fulfillment of the biblical mandate of companionship in marriage⁶²) and parents of time needed with their children.⁶³

⁶⁰ According to James Rickard (cited in Scott, p. 348), in 85% of divorces, the reason has something to do with money.

⁶¹ Depreciating items include such things as furniture and cars. According to Fremont (p. 156), new furniture depreciates 50% in the first year, while a new car depreciates 25% in the first year and an additional 15% in the second year. Appreciating items typically include such things as a house and an education.

⁶² See under "The Husband as His Wife's Companion" in Lesson 2.

While one way to eliminate indebtedness is to increase income by working more, a better way is to decrease spending. This may mean “moving down” in level of living⁶⁴ (less expensive house, car, clothes, vacation, etc.). It may also mean limiting or eliminating luxuries (eating out, recreational apparatuses, etc.). Don’t be like the man who once said, “I think everybody should live within his means, even if he has to borrow money to do it.” Make a living, but also live on what you make.

Credit cards should be used with caution. A person who charges \$80 every month for 5 years to a credit card with an 18% APR (Annual Percentage Rate), without paying down any of the debt, will have to pay more than \$200 a month over the following 5 years to pay it off. In other words, the \$4,800 originally charged (\$80 every month for 5 years) will cost more than \$12,000 (\$4,800 in principal + nearly \$7,500 in interest) when paid back. On average, those who buy on credit spend 20% more than those who pay with cash.⁶⁵

The Budget

The budget is an extremely effective instrument against indebtedness. Making and sticking to a budget helps alleviate much of the marital tension caused by money. Some suggested budget categories: automobile, clothing, college savings, education, entertainment/recreation, food, gifts, giving (including regular, weekly giving to church), housing, life insurance, medical/dental, miscellaneous, personal spending, general savings, and retirement savings.

⁶³Excessive debt not only harms the home, but also the local church. “If the people I see on a monthly basis in my law practice are typical, the average pastor would be shocked to learn how many people in his church can neither give as God has commanded nor serve in the church as they would like to because of the demands imposed on their time as a result of debt” (Joe Helm, “Escaping the Debt Trap,” *Today’s Christian Preacher*, Winter 2000, p. 4).

⁶⁴“It’s not the high cost of living that gets us, but living high” (James Rickard, cited in Scott, p. 348).

⁶⁵Helm, “Escaping the Debt Trap,” p. 5. According to James Rickard (cited in Scott, p. 347), the figure is 30-40% more. Here’s some more interesting stats from Rickard (cited in Scott, p. 348): If you go shopping with a friend, you spend 10% more. If you go shopping with children, you spend 12% more. If you go shopping with your husband, you spend 20% more. In a similar vein, avoid grocery shopping when you’re hungry.

The Threat of Luxurious Living

The Bible condemns luxurious living (James 5:5). Luxurious living is a threat to the home in at least two ways: 1) it can lead to excessive indebtedness and 2) it tends to produce children who are spiritually “soft,” unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary for the rigors of missionary life, etc. Missions, not a higher level of living, ought to be the ultimate outlet of money.⁶⁶ Seek to avoid both lack and luxury (Proverbs 30:8-9).

The Threat of Idolatry

A money-centered home is not a God-centered home; Jesus said in Matthew 6:24 that one cannot serve God and gold. Gold tends to make us forget God (Deuteronomy 6:10-12 and Proverbs 30:9). While it is not necessarily wrong to have riches, it is wrong for riches to have us. Furthermore, it is foolish to make money one’s master (Proverbs 11:28a, 23:5, 27:24a, Ecclesiastes 5:10, and 1 Timothy 6:17). Our children need to see (especially by our spending and giving habits) that money is not our god (Proverbs 23:4a, 28:20b, 22a, 1 Timothy 6:9-10), that the so called “bottom line” is not the bottom line.⁶⁷ Have a God-centered view of money, recognizing that money comes from God (Deuteronomy 8:17-18a and Proverbs 10:22a), that money is to be used for the glory of God (Proverbs 3:9⁶⁸), and that God is to be the Master of our money/the Prince of our pocketbook/the God of our gold/the King of our cash/the Ruler of our riches.

⁶⁶“God does not prosper a man’s business so he can move from a Ford to a Cadillac. God prospers a business so that 17,000 unreached peoples can be reached with the gospel” (John Piper, *Desiring God*, p. 164). See Psalm 67.

⁶⁷ According to Scripture, money is not the most important thing in life. Wisdom is more important than wealth (Proverbs 3:13-15, 8:10-11, 19, 16:16, and 20:15); righteousness is more important than riches (Proverbs 11:4 and 16:8); love is more important than “loot” (Proverbs 15:17); character is more important than cash (Proverbs 28:6); a good reputation is more important than great riches (Proverbs 22:1), and a good wife is more important than great wealth (Proverbs 31:10).

⁶⁸ Among other things, this verse seems to imply that the percentage of one’s giving to his or her local church should be based on gross, rather than net, income.

Lesson 8: Fidelity



Several forces threaten to harm the home. The previous two lessons focused on two of them: 1) the threat posed by the failure to forgive one's fellow family members and 2) the threat posed by money. The focus of this lesson is arguably the greatest threat to the home of all, infidelity, the failure to be faithful to one's spouse.

Our motto in marriage ought to be that of the Marines, *semper fidelis*, "always faithful." If our marriages are going to be marked by fidelity, it's going to take some good old-fashioned militancy. Marital fidelity must be defended to the death. Enemies within (our "flesh"/sin nature) and without (the world and the devil) are arrayed against us, seeking to destroy our homes through unfaithfulness. The purpose of this lesson is to sound a "call to arms," as well as to devise a battle plan against the insidious influences that can lead to infidelity, influences that must be fiercely fought.

For various reasons, the focus of this lesson will be husband-centered. This is not to say that wives are less susceptible to infidelity than their husbands. Both spouses are equally susceptible, though enticed with different kinds of bait (James 1:14).

Tragically, marital infidelity amongst men is not as rare as one might think, even in the Christian community. On pages 23-24 of *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, R. Kent Hughes cites two separate studies, one of a thousand Christian men that revealed that a staggering 23% had committed adultery, while 45% had committed a sexual impropriety of some kind; and another of a thousand pastors that revealed that 12% had committed adultery while in the ministry, 23% a sexual impropriety.

Following are ten suggestions to help husbands defend themselves against the threat of infidelity:

- Watch what you watch. Since men are stimulated primarily by sight (women primarily by touch), magazines, TV⁶⁹/movies/videos, and the Internet are some of Satan's favorite weapons. Avoid pornography like the plague.⁷⁰
- Say goodbye to the lustful eye. Christ said in Matthew 5:28 that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Like Job, every man needs to make a covenant with his eyes (Job 31:1). Men should look a woman in the eye and nowhere else. If necessary, radical measures must be taken. Notice Christ's words in Matthew 5:29 ("if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee"), which immediately follow His words in Matthew 5:28.⁷¹
- Flee if need be (1 Corinthians 6:18, 2 Timothy 2:22; cf. Mark 16:8 and Acts 7:29 to get a flavor of the Greek verb for "flee"). If you play with the fire of lust, you will get burned (Proverbs 6:27-29); David is a case in point. When the temptation to commit

⁶⁹"Men, it is impossible for you to maintain a pure mind if you are a television-watching 'couch potato'" (R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, p. 31).

⁷⁰ Steve Gallagher (*At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry*, p. 58) cites a survey taken by a well-known evangelical men's group in which a staggering 65% of the men surveyed reported the regular use of pornography.

⁷¹ Scott (p. 289) writes in this regard: "Radical action must be taken. The flesh must have no opportunity. This basic truth will often mean taking what may seem to other people to be drastic measures. You must starve the flesh to loosen its grip. You may need to cut out television, movies, and even certain routes of travel for awhile. You may need to graciously cut certain people out of your life. You may need to move. You may need to change jobs. You must figure out how you can make no provision for the flesh by not even allowing it a remote opportunity."

a sexual sin comes, be like Joseph⁷² (Genesis 39:7-12), not like David (2 Samuel 11:2-5). Better yet, don't allow yourself to be put in a situation where you have to find out whether you're a Joseph or a David.⁷³ "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14b). Avoid placing yourself in tempting situations (James 1:14), unlike the young man in Proverbs 7:6-8. "It is no good praying, 'Lead us not into temptation' and then deliberately walking straight into it" (Elisabeth Elliot, *Quest for Love*, p. 189). "Living a pure life before God requires the teamwork of your heart and your feet. The direction of purity begins within; you must support it in practical everyday decisions of where, when, and with whom you choose to be (Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 92). Some practical pointers: avoid the magazine aisle at the supermarket, use filters and passwords for the Internet, have your wife take scissors to your sports magazines before you read them, and avoid channel surfing.

- Don't touch other women. Because women are stimulated primarily by touch, a "touchy-feely" church may unwittingly foster infidelity.
- Don't be verbally intimate with other women. Verbal intimacy "greases the skids" to physical intimacy. Husbands, do not compliment other women on their looks, wardrobe, etc.
- Look in the Book and listen to what God says (Psalm 119:9). Heed the warnings of Proverbs 6:32-35, 1 Thessalonians 4:6 (notice the surrounding context of 4:3-8), and Hebrews 13:4. Notice the surrounding contexts of the exhortations in Proverbs 5:12-13, 6:20-23, 7:1-4, and 24.
- Keep your word. "Wilt thou . . . , forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as you both shall live?" Did you make such a vow on your wedding day? Consider framing it and hanging it up in a conspicuous place, thereby reminding yourself of it often. Like Daniel in Daniel 1:8, determine not to defile yourself.

⁷² "It is better to lose a good coat than a good character" (Dr. Gerald Priest).

⁷³ "I won't stick around to see how much temptation I can take. God is not impressed by my ability to stand up to sin. He's more impressed by the obedience I show when I run from it" (Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 95).

- Have a healthy physical relationship with your wife. See Proverbs 5:15-19 and 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.⁷⁴ Wives, help your husbands enjoy such a relationship. Husbands, make your wives want to enjoy such a relationship.
- Avoid Separation. If companionship is the number one concern of wives in marriage (Fremont, p. 30), then excessive time away from each other makes the wife more susceptible to infidelity. If sex is the number one concern of husbands in marriage, then excessive time away from each other makes the husband more susceptible to infidelity. See Proverbs 7:19.
- Fix your gaze on God and His glory. “Dietrich Bonhoeffer made the observation that when lust takes control, ‘At this moment God ... loses all reality Satan does not fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God’” (R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, p. 27). Negatively, consider the words of Proverbs 5:21 in its context. Positively, consider the words of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 in its context. Remember, infidelity, like all other sins, is a sin against God (Genesis 39:9).

⁷⁴“Both parties are to provide such adequate satisfaction that both ‘burning’ (unfulfilled sexual desire) and the temptation to find satisfaction elsewhere are avoided” (Mack, *Strengthening Your Marriage*, p. 133). “The husband should be so satisfied, that even if another woman entices him, he won’t be tempted” (Peace, p. 121).

Lesson 9: Discipline

In the introductory lesson to this series, several foundational issues crucial to building a strong home were identified, one of which was faith, i.e., taking God at His Word, trusting that He, in His infinite wisdom, knows how to manage our homes far better than we, as finite and fallen human beings, do.

For the Christian parent, there is perhaps no greater test of faith than the test regarding corporally disciplining one's child (see footnote 11). Due to the ever-increasing "squeeze" put on them by a godless society (Romans 12:2), Christian parents are tempted more than ever to limit or eliminate "the rod."⁷⁵ The purpose of this lesson is to give a biblical defense for the use of the rod and to offer some practical suggestions regarding its use.

Christian parent, consider carefully the following Scriptures regarding corporal discipline, many of which were referenced in Lesson 4: Proverbs 13:24 (cf. Proverbs 3:11-12, Hebrews 12:5-6, and Revelation 3:19a), 19:18 (see footnote 29), 22:15⁷⁶, 23:13-14 (see footnote 30), 29:15⁷⁷, 17⁷⁸, and Ephesians 6:4 ("nurture").

⁷⁵As evidence of society's ever-growing rejection of corporal discipline, consider the fact that 84% of parents favored corporal discipline in 1986, 67% in 1991, 56% in 1994 (study by *Parade* magazine, cited by Fugate, p. 191). Undoubtedly, the dissemination of Dr. Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care* (over 30 million copies sold since 1945, second only to the Bible) has contributed greatly to this significant shift in societal attitude (Fugate, p. 11).

⁷⁶The "foolishness" spoken of in this verse is not *mental* deficiency, but *moral* deficiency. The Hebrew verb translated "bound" in this verse is the same verb used in Joshua 2:18 and 21 to describe the tying of the cord of scarlet thread in Rahab's window.

⁷⁷"The man who remembers what he was taught at his mother's knee was probably bent over it at the time" (Bill Ireland).

⁷⁸Corporal discipline ultimately brings blessing not only to parents, but also to children. R. Kent Hughes (*Disciplines of a Godly Man*, pp. 265-266) cites a study by Dr. Stanley Coopersmith, associate professor of psychology at the University of California, "who surveyed 1,738 normal middle-class boys and their families, beginning in the preadolescent period and following them through to young manhood. After determining the boys with the best self-esteem, he then compared their homes and childhood influences with those boys having a lower sense of self-esteem. He found three important characteristics which distinguished them. The second was as follows: 2. The high-esteem group came from homes where parents had been significantly more strict in their approach to discipline. By contrast, the parents of the low-esteem group had created insecurity and dependence by their permissiveness. Furthermore, the most successful and

Following are several pointers regarding corporal discipline:

- Make corporal discipline (rather than “timeouts”) your disciplinary method of choice (particularly for younger children⁷⁹).
- Make the rod your disciplinary tool. “There is no mention in the Bible of utilizing any other instrument” (Fugate, pp. 152-153). Since this is an argument from silence, one cannot be overly dogmatic at this point, however.
- Avoid the following failures (Tedd Tripp, p. 136): inconsistent use of the rod; failure to persist; failure to be effective⁸⁰; disciplining in anger.
- Discipline in private.⁸¹
- Apply corporal discipline when needed. “When does a child need a spanking? When you have given a directive that he has heard and is within his capacity to understand and he has not obeyed without challenge, without excuse or without delay; he needs a spanking” (Tedd Tripp, p. 171). “The ‘when’ of spanking is so simple that parents miss it. If your child has not obeyed, he needs to be spanked” (Tedd Tripp, p. 171).
- Apply corporal discipline as long as needed. “The child can decide on his own when he wants the chastisement to cease. Whenever he is willing to submit to the parent’s will, he can profess his willingness to obey. He should be given the opportunity for an

independent young men during the latter period of the study were found to have come from homes that demanded the strictest accountability and responsibility. And as could have been predicted, the family ties remained the strongest ... in the homes where discipline and self-control had been a way of life.”

⁷⁹For older children, loss of privilege is a good method.

⁸⁰“Punish seldom, but really and in good earnest, —frequent and slight punishment is a wretched system indeed” (Ryle, p. 27). Corporal discipline teaches a child the biblical principle that “the way of transgressors is hard” (Proverbs 13:15b), that “crime doesn’t pay.”

⁸¹Fugate (p. 193) gives this wise advice: “Spanking should never be done in public, or even around relatives of which you are not sure. If your child rebels in public, you can take him home to deal with the problem—even if it is inconvenient.” While the risks involved in corporally disciplining your children cannot be entirely eliminated, they can be limited.

honorable, but unconditional surrender” (Fugate, p. 166). The child’s rebellious will must be broken (see footnote 46).

- Make repentance and restitution part of the disciplinary process. Identify the sin committed, exhort/admonish the child to confess it (asking for God’s forgiveness first⁸², then for the forgiveness of any others he has sinned against), administer corporal discipline⁸³, then have the child make restitution (if necessary).
- Remember the purpose of discipline. The root word of discipline is “disciple.” The purpose of discipline is to disciple/train/correct a child away from sin and to God, not to “punish” him. Parents, make it your goal to be used of God to shape your child’s attitudes and affections, not just his actions (see footnote 45). “All behavior is linked to some attitude of heart. Therefore, discipline must address attitudes of heart” (Tedd Tripp, pp. 21-22).
- Balance corporal discipline and words of reproof (Proverbs 29:15) with words of praise/encouragement. “Ninety-five percent of what children do during the waking day is acceptable behavior; yet, in the name of training, parents often concentrate on the five percent of unacceptable behavior to the exclusion of supporting and encouraging the children’s good behavior” (Fremont, p. 82). For every “no,” seek to give a “way to go.”

(Lesson Continued on Next Page)

⁸²“Avoid making correction a contest between you and your child. Your child’s controversy is always with God” (Tedd Tripp, p. 199). “The emphasis of your thinking and of your subsequent discipline should be on what the child has done by sinning against God, not on how his action has caused you some personal discomfort, trouble, or embarrassment” (Priolo, p. 33).

⁸³Fugate offers three reasons why it is wise to administer corporal discipline after confession: 1) the parent is less likely to discipline in sinful anger (p. 216); 2) making the child admit his guilt first eliminates any temptation for the child to think he is being disciplined unjustly (p. 261); and 3) the genuineness of the child’s repentance will be seen in his response to the discipline (p. 261).

10 Simple Principles Regarding Corporal Discipline

1. CALLED FOR—not every offense demands corporal discipline; make sure that you have all the facts and that you have them straight
2. COMPREHENDED—make sure child knows why he’s being disciplined
3. CURRENT—apply discipline as soon after the offense as possible
4. CONTROLLED—be self-disciplined when administering discipline
5. CONSISTENT—consistently discipline and discipline with consistency
6. COMMENSURATE—make sure the “punishment fits the crime”
7. CARING—discipline for their good, not because they have irritated you; don’t humiliate them
8. CONCILIATORY—make things right vertically (with the Lord) and horizontally (with others)
9. CONSTRUCTIVE—make sure it communicates that sin is painful and not worth it
10. CAUTIOUS—don’t discipline in public

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Hebrews 12:11 (cf. Proverbs 29:17)

Lesson 10: Devotions



If we were to liken biblical parenting to a two-edged sword, its two edges would be the focus of the previous lesson, discipline, and the focus of this lesson, “devotions.” Discipline and devotions work in tandem, the former restraining a child’s depravity, the latter renewing a child’s mind.⁸⁴ The primary purpose of this lesson is to encourage parents to begin to make (or continue to make) “family devotions” (also known as “family altar”) a regular part of their parenting repertoire.⁸⁵ A secondary purpose is to encourage parents to begin to instill (or continue to instill) the practice of “personal devotions” in their children.

It must be admitted that the Bible does not *explicitly* mandate family devotions, nor does It give particulars as to how they should be conducted. The biblical warrant for family devotions arises out of the parental responsibility to teach one’s children (see Lesson 4). One excellent way this teaching takes place on a formal or structured level in the home is through family devotions.

⁸⁴ As pointed out in a previous lesson (under “Restrain and Train Them” in Lesson 4), restraining makes training possible. A disciplined child will be far more apt to receive instruction.

⁸⁵The potential benefit of family devotions is reflected in a survey of 100 Baptist missionaries, 80% of which were raised in a home that practiced family devotions (class notes, “The Christian Home,” taught by Terry Price, Maranatha Baptist Bible College, Watertown, WI, spring 1991).

What is family devotions? Family devotions is the intentional⁸⁶ effort on the part of parents to regularly sit down with their children for the purpose of instilling within them biblical truth. Family devotions are not an end in themselves, but a means to an end. Family devotions and the Christian education ministry of the local church (Sunday School, Christian day school, etc.) work in tandem, each supplementing and reinforcing the other. Do not succumb to the temptation to delegate this responsibility entirely to the church, Christian day school, etc.

Typically, family devotions consists of three components: Bible intake, prayer, and singing. Bible intake could include reading directly from the Bible, reading from Bible storybooks (especially with younger children), reviewing what is being learned in the local church, memorizing Scripture, acting out Bible stories, and playing Bible-based games (though family devotions should be a regular part of your family's routine, don't make them routine). Additional elements might include focusing on missions, learning about a famous Christian of the past, and sharing testimonies. Any other ideas?

As with personal devotions, it is good to establish a particular time and place during which and at which family devotions take place. It almost goes without saying that the father should lead in family devotions.⁸⁷ If the father is unable or unwilling to do so, the mother should fill the void (as Timothy's mother undoubtedly did—compare Acts 16:1, 2 Timothy 1:5, and 2 Timothy 3:15).

⁸⁶Family devotions do not just “happen”; they must be planned. They also must be made a priority in a family's schedule. Other things (i.e., things that don't matter) may need to be done away with. In this regard, Tedd Tripp (p. 70) states: “Many families who always have time for team practice are unable [read: unwilling] to organize family life around regular times of family Bible reading and prayer.”

⁸⁷In his book on the Puritans entitled *A Quest for Godliness*, J. I. Packer states on page 270: “It was the husband's responsibility to channel the family into religion; to take them [notice: not send them] to church on the Lord's Day, and oversee the sanctifying of that entire day in the home; to catechise the children, and teach them the faith; to examine the whole family after each sermon, to see how much had been retained and understood, and to fill any gaps in understanding that might remain; to lead the family in worship daily, ideally twice a day; and to set an example of sober godliness at all time and in all matters. To this end he must be willing to take time out to learn the faith that he is charged to teach.”

Following are some helpful resources pertaining to family devotions:

- Family Worship* by James Hufstetler
- Rediscovering the Lost Treasure of Family Worship* by Jerry Marcellino
- A Book for Family Worship* by Jim Cromarty
- Take Care in the Bath: 52 Stories That Teach Biblical Truths* by Jim Cromarty
- The Gospel for Children* by John Leuzarder
- Leading Little Ones to God* by Marian Schoolland
- The Bible in Pictures for Little Eyes* by Kenneth Taylor
- The Beginner's Bible* published by Zondervan
- Egermeier's Bible Story Book*
- The One Year Bible for Children* by V. Gilbert Beers
- Various A-B-C memory verse plans⁸⁸
- Catechisms⁸⁹
- Hymnbooks

Here's a suggested personal Bible reading plan for children

Year	Age of Child*	Plan**
1	Kindergarten - 1 st grade	Beers's one year story Bible
2	1 st grade – 2 nd grade	Psalms and Proverbs (2 times)
3	2 nd grade – 3 rd grade	New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs
4	3 rd grade – 4 th grade	NT, Psalms, and Proverbs (notes on NT)
5	4 th grade – 5 th grade	Entire Bible
6	5 th grade – 6 th grade	Entire Bible (notes on OT)
7 and beyond	6 th grade – 7 th grade and beyond	Child's choice (with parental consultation)

*Since year is a calendar year (January-December), age involves parts of two successive school grades.

**These Bible reading plans are available from the author of this lesson.

⁸⁸ Freemont has one in Appendix C of his book. Another one is available from the author of this lesson. A superb one is *The ABC Memory Verse Program* published by Bev & Jerry Priest.

⁸⁹See, for example, *A Baptist Catechism*, revised by John Piper and *The Baptist Family Catechism* by Jerry Priest.

Lesson 11: Dating



Dating is a minefield. In spite of this fact, many parents and churches seem to take a *laissez-faire* (passive, hands off) attitude towards it. The tragic result is young people left to navigate the minefield on their own, making the same mistakes their parents, pastors, etc. did. This lesson will attempt to provide some help for parents in teaching their children a biblical perspective on dating, thus avoiding the destructive potential inherent in dating as practiced in today's culture.

The Purpose⁹⁰ for Dating

No matter what the activity, *why* we do it (purpose/aim) will dictate *how* we do it (practice/actions). Dating is no exception. Therefore, the first question to be asked is: Why date? Many answers have been given.

⁹⁰ Remember, there is a difference between the purpose for doing something and the byproducts of doing it. We must guard against the danger of making a byproduct a purpose.

Wrong reasons to date

1. To have fun
2. To overcome loneliness

The Danger of Idolatry in Dating

“Any time we allow someone to displace God as the focus of our affection, we’ve moved from innocent appreciation of someone’s beauty or personality to the dangerous realm of infatuation. Instead of making God the object of our longing, we wrongly direct these feelings toward another human. We become idolaters, bowing to someone other than God, hoping that this person will meet our needs and bring fulfillment.”

(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 141)

3. To develop social skills
4. To satisfy one’s parents or peers

“Parents should be low-key about boyfriend and girlfriend talk. Unconsciously, parents may push their teen into pseudo-dating relationships by focusing too much on ‘Who’s your boyfriend now?’ or ‘Did I hear that you and Lisa broke up? What happened?’ Teens may get the unspoken message, even unintended, that you place high value on their ability to catch and hold a romantic interest.”

(Lane Powell, *Living with Teenagers*, October 1995, p. 29)

5. To evangelize

The Right Reason to Date: Marriage

“I believe the whole purpose of dating is to find someone who would be a good husband or wife.”
(14 year-old girl, quoted in *Youthworker Update*, March 1995, p. 8)

The Person to Date

“The most important aspect about dating is who you go out with—because you marry who you date. If you date a loser, you will marry a loser. If you date a winner, you will marry a winner.”

(Pat Griffiths)

The Wrong Person to Date

1. An unbeliever

Passages: Deuteronomy 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:39, 9:5; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

Proof: Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-11; Nehemiah 13:26)

Practical Considerations: loneliness, child rearing, etc.

2. A disobedient believer (Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; cf. Proverbs 13:20 and 1 Corinthians 15:33)

3. A doctrinally-different believer (Amos 3:3)

The Right Person to Date

1. Mr. Right

Character (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1)

Loving Leader (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Hard Worker (Proverbs 6:6-11, 13:4, 19:15)

2. Mrs. Right

Character (Proverbs 31)

Sweet, Submissive Spirit (1 Peter 3:1-6)

3. Someone of whom your parents approve (Ephesians 6:1-3)

Purity in Dating

Passages: 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4

Principles

1. Physical intimacy is for marriage (Hebrews 13:4).
2. God will judge those who engage in physical intimacy outside the bounds of marriage (1 Thessalonians 4:6; Hebrews 13:4).

Physically: STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)

Emotionally: the emotional scars of sexual sin (Proverbs 6:32-33)

Spiritually (Romans 1:24-27)

3. Believers should differ from unbelievers in the realm of physical intimacy (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:5).

Pointers

1. Don't start dating too soon
2. Avoid one-on-one dating

"I avoid one-on-one dating because it encourages physical intimacy and places me in an isolated setting with a girl. Can't I handle it? Don't I have any self-control? Yeah, maybe I could handle it, but that's not the point. God says, 'Flee the evil desires of youth ...' (2 Timothy 2:22). I won't stick around to see how much temptation I can take. God is not impressed by my ability to stand up to sin. He's more impressed by the obedience I show when I run from it."

(I Kissed Dating Goodbye, p. 95)

“If virginity is to be preserved, lines must be drawn. Why put yourself in any situation where the lines become smudged and obscure? Why take the risks? Why accept the pressure of tremendous temptation when you can easily avoid it by refusing to be anywhere where compromise is possible?”

(*Passion and Purity*, p. 147)

3. Write out guidelines regarding physical contact before you start dating. Seek parental approval (Ephesians 6:1-3).

“As you enter the world of dating, resolve now what you believe in, what you won’t compromise on, and what path you’ll pursue. Now is the time for thinking and planning. The heat of passion is no time to make such moves.”

(Mark Littleton)

4. Develop guidelines that are godly, not just good.

“If you’re worried about falling over the edge of the cliff when it comes to your relationships with members of the opposite sex, quit looking at the guardrail—‘how far you can go’; keep your eye on the center line: God’s purpose for your life and relationships.”

(John Holzmann, *Dating with Integrity*, p. 126)

“If we were honest with ourselves, many of us would admit that we’re not really interested in purity at all. Instead, we feel satisfied by meeting the minimum requirements, content with spending our time in the ‘gray areas,’ flirting with darkness and never daring to step into the light of righteousness.”

(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 88)

5. Put your guidelines into practice, not just down on paper.

“Many couples have made commitments to sexual purity, but instead of adopting a lifestyle that supports this commitment, they continue relationships that encourage physical expression and place themselves in dangerous settings.”

(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 92)

6. Don't do anything with, to, or for your date that you would not do with, to, or for your sibling (John Holzmann, *Dating with Integrity*, p. 48). See 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

“I stopped viewing girls as potential girlfriends and started treating them as sisters in Christ.”

(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 24)

“Guys, it's time we stood up to defend the honor and righteousness of our sisters. We need to stop acting like 'hunters' trying to catch girls and begin seeing ourselves as warriors standing guard over them.”

(*I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 97)

“I want to weep when I think of the many times I have neglected my responsibility to guard girls' hearts. Instead of playing the role of a warrior, I played the thief, stealing their focus from God for myself. I'm determined to do better. I want to be the kind of friend to whom girls' future husbands could one day say, 'Thank you for standing watch over my wife's heart. Thank you for guarding her purity.’”

(*I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, pp. 98-99)

7. Don't engage in any form of physical contact with your date that you would feel uncomfortable engaging in with someone other than your spouse.

"I will do nothing with members of the opposite sex now, while we are unmarried, that we cannot continue to do in good conscience later, after one or the other of us has married someone else."

(John Holzmann, *Dating with Integrity*, p. 33)

"We need to ask ourselves a serious question. If another person's body doesn't belong to us (that is, we're not married), what right do we have to treat the people we date any differently than a married person would treat someone who wasn't his or her spouse?"

(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 94)

8. Don't engage in any form of physical contact with your date that you would feel uncomfortable engaging in if your parents or pastor were to suddenly enter the room.

"Young people who indulge in looks and caresses, or speak words in which they would be unwilling to be surprised (i.e., overheard) by their fathers, mothers, husbands or wives, bear witness that their conduct is not that of honor and conscience."

(St. Francis de Sales, quoted in Elisabeth Elliot, *Quest for Love*, p. 61)

9. Refrain from intimacy (verbal or physical) until engagement or marriage.

"My father counseled his four sons never to say, 'I love you' to a woman until they were ready to follow immediately with 'Will you marry me?'"

(Elisabeth Elliot, *Passion and Purity*, p. 93)

Recommended Resources

I Kissed Dating Goodbye by Joshua Harris

Passion and Purity: Learning to Bring Your Love Life Under Christ's Control by Elisabeth Elliot

Quest for Love by Elisabeth Elliot

Dating with Integrity: Honoring Christ in Your Relationships with the Opposite Sex by John Holzmann

A 10-lesson series on dating, available from the author of this lesson