

# Biblical Understanding of Marriage And the Family

## Marriage

When God first made the world He planned to underpin the human race with the family. Why? Because God believes in families. Now how do I know that family is the most important plan God has for mankind? Because the devil spends so much of his time trying to wreck it. This is precisely why it is called **Holy Matrimony**: because God ordained it. Marriage is not about a piece of paper in church, it's about God's blessing on a new family or couple.

**Genesis 2:18** “And the Lord God said, it is not good for man to dwell alone, I will make him a helper comparable to him.” Notice here the word 'comparable' as in 'same as'; God expected them to be co-equals, not lording it over one another, but taking specific positions appointed by the Lord. Judaism is a matriarchal society where the woman takes care of the home and family. She is also responsible for teaching the children to love the Lord. She is to be a helpmate to her husband. The man has the authority in God and the woman has the emotional and spiritual superiority to help her in child rearing. This is how God appointed it and they take up their roles respectively with the Lord as the head of the house. This is why the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 4:12 “**A threefold cord can never be broken**”.

**Genesis 2:24** says “**Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh**” That is 'one flesh': one woman, with one man, anything else is fornication and sinful. The text goes on to say; “**And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**” As long as they remained two they are not shamed; to double up on this is to bring shame upon themselves. They are to love and cherish each other and their children so that they grow up balanced, because the children draw their gender differences from this stable relationship. Sexual relationships are pure and good provided they are according to how God ordained them within Marriage; anything else is evil in His sight (**Hebrews 13:4**).

This union is for life, and will blossom in time because its' a threefold cord, but it has to be worked at. It's best if first of all you are best friends, as too much emotion at first in a relationship can die just as quick and leave both parties embarrassed. You make vows to stick together through sickness and through health and God honours your word by blessing your union. So it is important that you realize you have made a covenant with a Holy God.

Here are some DOs and DON'Ts on who to marry.

- 1) It is important that your choice of partner is a believer.(**2 Cor 6:14-18**)
- 2) You must know by a witness from God's Spirit that your choice is also God's choice.
- 3) Both of you should be committed to living a Biblical lifestyle.
- 4) You should make it your aim to spend the rest of your life together.
- 5) You should always discuss with your partner, your different ages and your nationalities and cultures before you marry. You should also discuss each others' ideas about having children as this can be problematic in the future.

## God's Plan for Husbands

The husband's role in the family is one of leadership. Notice I said leadership, not dictatorship! I

Peter 3:7 states: “Husbands, likewise dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Men have for a long time looked down upon women and treated them as second class people, and this is precisely why their marriages do not work. The Bible has teaching by both Peter and Paul not to be harsh with women (1 Peter 3:7, Col 3:19). Men should learn loving leadership; his authority is headship under God and is loving leadership. David Augsburg has illustrated this point in two categories:

### 1) **Autocratic**

Gives orders without asking questions, without permitting questions, makes demands, dishes out directions, lays down the law, is defensive if challenged, requires compliance regardless of consent or agreement, pushes and manipulates a one man rule, says 'you do', 'you must do', 'you ought to have done', 'you better do', generates friction, resistance, resentment, separates and isolates people.

### 2) **Christocratic**

Asks questions, seeks to truly hear, suggests alternatives, respects the freedom and dignity of others, can affirm the truth clearly, values willing co-operation, works for open agreement and understanding, leads, attracts, persuades personal relationship side by side. Says 'come lets do ', 'we might have done', 'can we try', generates acceptance, co-operation and reconciliation, unites and helps people to relate to each other.

A husband should love his wife and give her all support for her spiritual needs ([Ephesians 5:25-26](#)). He should love, care and give support to her emotional needs ([Ephesians 5:33](#)). It should become second nature, because God's blessing has made them one flesh. Neither the wife nor the husband should defraud each other sexually as their bodies are not their own, they belong to each other ([1 Corinthians 7:3-4](#)).

The husband is the spiritual head of the home, and the family must see him as that, being a good example for the children to follow and the wife to be proud of. He should set the standard for his family as the Priest of the home, gathering them around the Bible and calling them to prayer when trouble closes in ([1 Corinthians 11:5](#)). He should take the load from time to time off his wife so she can get her sustenance from the Lord in prayer. She must at all times be praised and know that she is wanted and a valued part of the family ([Proverbs 31:10, 28-31](#)). God always holds husbands responsible for the spiritual and emotional welfare of their wives ([Ephesians 5:29](#)).

## **God's Plan for Wives**

A brief look at life shows that women and wives have often been mistreated, mistrusted, and downright neglected. Different cultures and religions tell the same story. A Chinese poet Fu Hsuan said “How sad it is to be a woman!! Nothing on earth is held so cheap” Why on earth are women seen as inferior to men? The answer is because both men and women have neglected God. He is the third member of the threefold cord that is never broken ([Ecclesiastes 4:12](#)).

Yeshua (Jesus) came and treated women beautifully so that it amazed His disciples in [John 4:24](#) and annoyed the religious leaders ([Luke 7:39](#)). Women should be very supportive of their husbands, not giving to flirt with other men or giving their husbands a reason to doubt their love. You should always dress sensibly and reverently as would a Godly woman, especially in church so as not to shame him. Scripture teaches that you should wear a head covering whilst praying, ([1 Corinthians 11:5-16](#)) so as not to shame your head or husband. You should read your Bible

regularly so as to be capable of instructing your children in the ways of the Lord. You should always have your personal time with the Lord whether its early morning or late at night after the children have gone to bed. You should have some space for yourself.

The husband should make sure you have this space. One more thing that happens from time to time is that women can get a great sense of lack of self worth and they need a strong man there to take the load from time to time, and to remind her that God loves her.

### **Biblical Submission**

Jesus has done so much for us on the cross, and He only achieved that because of His submission to His Father. In turn we need to submit to His love and care for our lives. We also need to submit to each other for the Lord's sake ([1 Peter 2:13](#), [James 4:6-10](#), [John 13:1](#), [Philippians 2:1](#)). So you see, it's not just the wives that should submit, but it's vital for us all not only to submit to the higher powers as part of our responsibility, but also it is the key to our freedom and service to the Lord.

Now it just may be that you are a believer with a unbelieving partner, well submission is what will turn his/her head towards the Lord. So you may say 'well how do I find out what to submit to?' It's very easy: just read God's word and submit to its demands and if you get stuck go to a Pastor or church Bible teacher for some advice. One of the things that submission suffers from is lack of communication. If you get offended by your partner and go into a long sulk, then if you don't talk you will not be able to submit. Learn to forgive and let go. There is a saying, “[let go and let God](#)”.

### **God's Order for Family and Children**

Society's attack on the family unit is ever increasing; we hear regularly that families are breaking up. There is not a family in the land that does not know about another family that split up and called it a day. In fact, these days most families have parents that did not marry; both men and women use the family unit like a lottery moving from one partner to another just to see if they can get lucky.

This is because they have not taken notice of God's plan for the family; the result is the children grow up in rebellion towards God and anyone else that has authority. And they carry on in the same mode as their parents: looking for love, but denying the person that can give them that love. Yeshua is not here to judge the world, indeed His reason for coming was to save the world from itself, to save people from themselves. Yes, the call of this age is “[I did it my way](#)”. They have abortions to order, and children are a commodity and not the precious gift God intended them to be. Now the Bible warns that this will happen, but praise God He also gives us an answer. God has a better plan, and we are wise if we at least study this plan before we discard it completely. We have the Spiritual family of God on earth; God is our Father if we are born again and forgiven from our sins. We can read in the New Testament just what God expects from His family.

### **Christ Centered Homes**

God only ever wanted to bless our homes, He only ever wanted to show us the way to peace and happiness. Throughout the New Testament we find whole families that gave their lives to Jesus. In Philippi, Lydia and her household were baptized ([Acts 16:15](#)), also the jailer's whole family were filled with joy because they became believers ([Acts 16:34](#)). The house of Cornelius was filled with healing and power as they gave their life to Messiah ([Acts 10:2](#), [John 4:53](#)). It would be wise of you to do what Martha and Mary did, and sit at His feet and listen to what He has to say ([Luke 10:38-39](#)).

We do not only have a responsibility to our own family but to all families that watch us every day of our lives and wish they had what we have. If the believers don't follow God how will anyone else? Everything we do is on show to the world - we are ambassadors for Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:20](#)). Our homes need to be places that show we are the followers of the King of Peace, and they will be if we learn to live by His rules in the Bible. God will then take care of the rest.

In this society where children are so often unwanted, it is particularly important that we show and emphasize the blessings of parenthood. Children are a blessing, not a nuisance and I believe that there are no such thing as bad children, just bad parents. Children are not only a blessing, but an inheritance in the future and our great reward ([Psalm 127:3-5](#)). The book of Proverbs tells us wise and righteous children bring joy to their parents ([Proverbs 23:24, 27:11, 29:3](#)).

There is something very blessed about children; Jesus asked them to come to Him ([Matt 19:13-15](#)) so He could bless them, because He said “[the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.](#)” He went on to equate their innocence with the Kingdom of Heaven and said “[whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes Me.](#)”

In a world where lots of horrible things happen to children, even by their own parents, God wants to receive and protect them ([Matt 18:14, Psalm 27:10](#)). The Lambs are always close to the shepherd's heart ([Isaiah 40:11](#)); He has His angels protecting them ([Math 18:10, Heb 1:14](#)). It is quite normal that a mother having spent the whole day looking after her child will become very tired and her patience will become very stretched. It's here that the father should take over so the mother can have a little time for herself. This is especially true with families that have no friends or family near, or if the mother is on her own after a divorce or perhaps a bereavement. She needs support and help and that is where the church can become very helpful with mothers & toddlers or just having another older sister come to support her.

Young children should be brought up in the love and admonition of the Lord and taught to obey their parents and honour their parents and grandparents ([Exodus 20:12, Deut 5:16](#)). It should be the parents that run the home, not the children through their tantrums ([Ephesians 6:1-3](#)). Training them as they grow up is the preferred Biblical way ([Prov 22:6](#)); remember, you will never have the right to teach God's children if you can not bring up your own properly. Both parents have a dual responsibility to look after their children and with God's help and sure discipline turn them into model citizens.

Each generation is the product of the one before; if we want to keep society straight and true for our families to live in we need to make sure our children have the right manners and respect and tolerance for other people and their way of life.

Children are influenced by the atmosphere in the home - if it's an orderly home it will have orderly children, if not we have young rebels who have no time for anyone but them and theirs. They react negatively or positively to everything they see in your home. Both parents need to be honored, and you should never allow a situation to develop where the children become a wedge between the parents, playing one against the other.

Children should be brought up in an atmosphere of faith, and should be taught that God is the provider ([Genesis 22:14](#)) and that He will always supply our needs ([Philippians 4:19](#)) although it is the father who will work to keep his family ([1Thessolonians 4:11-12](#)). Even his wages are God given ([1 Chronicles 29:14](#)) and for this the family should be thankful. In today's world children have plenty of presents but no parents, and parenthood involves sharing our lives together. Many families today don't even meet around the dinner table. Children take their meals away into their rooms to play on computer games etc, and the family is one in name only, but these times are

precious and its time for the family to catch up with each other and find out about each other's day.

Many children are bullied at school but nobody knows because they dare not mention it. Many have taken their own lives because of this and many other problems, including stress from exams. I only allowed my children one hour after school to do homework and that's it for the day. The school has them for six hours; what can't be done in that time should wait till tomorrow - the child should have time to relax. The children need to know that their parents are on their side when it's right to be, and will always defend them from bullies and irate teachers who also can be bullied into getting league tables right. The children will carry the stress from this if you're not careful, and you need to be on the lookout for these signs. Emotional security is very important; children need to know they are loved even when naughty and must never feel neglected or rejected ([Prov 27:5](#)).

Children need to be taught and shown by example how to deal with things and how to relate to others. ([3 John 2:12](#)) A strong moral code is vital to sustain them, a set of rules that will not be compromised as they serve God. This is not rigidly but lovingly kept as they trust in the grace of God for their wellbeing. Too much emphasis is placed on intellect nowadays and it's unnecessary, after all Peter and the other Apostles were all unlearned men ([Acts 4:13](#)). This said, God is not against natural education when accompanied by spiritual advice ([Daniel 1:17](#)). Our job as parents is to educate our children, but with spiritual emphasis, whilst praying that God will protect them in this godless school system.

Parents should always be praying for their children, claiming the promises of God. Yet there is one more vital lesson we should learn and that is to give our children to God. Most Christian kids are mollycoddled and over protected and end up with no street credibility and just find it so difficult to manage in this world. But if you give them to God He for sure loves them more than you could ever do, and so it's important you don't take them back off the altar, but let God be God.

## **Learning to Discipline our children**

One of the common sayings today is “[Spare the rod and spoil the child](#)”. The word 'to spoil' means to corrupt, ruin, or destroy. Yet today in society spoiling children has become acceptable. Grandmothers spoil children unless you intervene, not that they should not have treats but for good reasons, and at special times (not simply to shut them up from winging at you.) But a spoiled child is an unloved child because love has discipline.

Now there are those that take discipline to the extreme, and this is wrong also. This is usually manifest in over smacking, and constant nagging at them, telling them they are useless and a pain. Now this does not help them at all to learn what they need to learn, it's simply complying to your moods. But God chastises us not for His pleasure, but so we can learn for our good. Which means it's not continually happening but we have to take time to learn our children what is acceptable in society. If we give them what they want when they want it, they will grow up thinking life owes them a living and when it's not there they will take it from wherever.

## **Training by Rod, Reward, and Rebuke**

In discipline we need to take a positive attitude to training our children when they have sinned, and praising them when they have been obedient. The giving and withholding of rewards is a valid and important form of training. In giving of rewards, therefore parents should be teaching their children vital and natural and spiritual lessons ([Deut 28:1-14](#)).

Its important that while using this method we are changing their behaviour and not trying to mold their character, so that they become performance orientated.

When God disciplines us He rebukes us ([Hebrews 12:5](#)). This is the same word which translates as 'convict' in [John 16:8](#) where it speaks of the Holy Spirit convicting the world of sin. So then, when we see our children sin we are quite within our rights to rebuke them ([Psalm 39:11](#)). The Holy Spirit will also convict them of sin if they are brought up to respect the Lord. All rebuking of children should always be done in love and not heated emotion.

This will allow them to be better motivated and will help to develop your better relationship. ([Prov 28:23-24](#)) We must never rebuke our children out of anger, annoyance, or embarrassment, or because we have come home from work in a bad mood ([Prov 14:29](#)). We must only rebuke them in love for their own good ([Eph 4:29](#)). If you find yourself rebuking your children more in public than at home, it could be because you are embarrassed by them. Remember, discipline is for their good and not your convenience.

Now we have already discussed that if we do not discipline our children we don't really love them ([Prov 13:24](#)). This is I know is a very strong point to make, but scripture backs it up in [Prov 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15](#). The Lord Himself disciplines us in this manner, though not literally. The word for punish in [Hebrews 12:6](#) means to scourge. Yet does this mean He does not love us? Certainly not! He does it because He loves us and wants us to grow straight and true. Now its very interesting to note that the word for rod can mean metaphorically, as administering discipline does not have to mean a literal rod. Some have said it can be anything as long as it is not your hand since the children usually associate your hands with love and affection.

We can see that in the most overwhelming cases a rebuke will do the job, but if something substantial is needed we need to make sure the children know exactly why they are being disciplined. They should especially learn to behave in church.

### **Before Disciplining**

The child needs to be aware of the ground rules before he is disciplined, and what punishment will follow. For instance, will he be given a warning, after the count of three etc? The parent should have decided well in advance what the punishment will be. We should treat tantrums, especially outside the home, seriously ([Eph 6](#)). You must having decided what you will do and having warned the child, be consistent so that the child knows exactly where he stands.

### **During Discipline**

Disciplining should be a most important time of training, and your sudden anger outbursts are not good for the child. It is always best to take the child aside to his room or somewhere quiet so you can get your message over to the child that he has broken the rules you set, even though he will already know that. It is also important that an apology to those wronged or some kind of repentance be required ending with a prayer where you hug the child and pray for him/her to do better.

### **After Discipline**

Never apologize for disciplining your child unless you are in the wrong. After all you disciplined him because you love him and you must make him not want to do that again. The child must know he/she is loved and forgiven immediately after. It may also be necessary for him to go and say sorry to those whom he wronged in order for them to learn the lesson.