

Family devotions



Family Devotions and The Simple Gospel by R. J. Adams



Leadership and Devotions Study

by R. J. Adams

Family Leadership And Devotions

(1 Cor 11:3 NCV) But I want you to understand this: The head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.

(Prov 25:28 NIV) Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.

(1 Cor 7:37 NIV) But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, ...

The verses above show us that the man is intended by God to be the head of the family. A man who has accepted this responsibility will have self control and will power to carry out God's will for his family as outlined in the scriptures.

Rules For Elders And Overseers

The rules in the verses below show that in order to qualify for any type of church leadership position a man must rule over his own family well and have the will power and self control to resist the temptations of the world and live peaceably and wisely.

(1 Tim 3:1-7 NCV) What I say is true: Anyone wanting to become an elder desires a good work. An elder must not give people a reason to criticize him, and he must have only one wife. He must be self-controlled, wise, respected by others, ready to welcome guests, and able to teach. He must not drink too much wine or like to fight, but rather be gentle and peaceable, not loving money. He must be a good family leader, having children who cooperate with full respect. (If someone does not know how to lead the family, how can that person take care of God's church?) But an elder must not be a new believer, or he might be too proud of himself and be judged guilty just as the devil was. An elder must also have the respect of people who are not in the church so he will not be criticized by others and caught in the devil's trap.

(Titus 1:6-8 NCV) An elder must not be guilty of doing wrong, must have only one wife, and must have believing children. They must not be known as children who are wild and do not cooperate. As God's manager, an elder must not be guilty of doing wrong, being selfish, or becoming angry quickly. He must not drink too much wine, like to fight, or try to get rich by cheating others. An elder must be ready to welcome guests, love what is good, be wise, live right, and be holy and self-controlled.

Rules For Deacons

(1 Tim 3:8-13 NCV) In the same way, deacons must be respected by others, not saying things they do not mean. They must not drink too much wine or try to get rich by cheating others. With a clear conscience they must follow the secret of the faith that God made known to us. Test them first. Then let them serve as deacons if you find nothing wrong in them. In the same way, women must be respected by others. They must not speak evil of others. They must be self-controlled and trustworthy in everything. Deacons must have only one wife and be good leaders of their children and their own families. Those who serve well as deacons are making an honorable place for themselves, and they will be very bold in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Family Values

(Titus 1:15-16 NCV) To those who are pure, all things are pure, but to those who are full of sin and do not believe, nothing is pure. Both their minds and their consciences have been ruined. They say they know God, but their actions show they do not accept him. They are hateful people, they refuse to obey, and they are useless for doing anything good.

(Titus 2:1-8 NCV) But you must tell everyone what to do to follow the true teaching. Teach older men to be self-controlled, serious, wise, strong in faith, in love, and in patience. In the same way, teach older women to be holy in their behavior, not speaking against others or enslaved to too much wine, but teaching what is good. Then they can teach the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be wise and pure, to be good workers at home, to be kind, and to yield to their husbands. Then no one will be able to criticize the teaching God gave us. In the same way, encourage young men to be wise. In every way be an example of doing good deeds. When you teach, do it with honesty and seriousness. Speak the truth so that you cannot be criticized. Then those who are against you will be ashamed because there is nothing bad to say about us.

Joshua Leads His Family

(Josh 24:15 NIV) But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

The Jailer And His Family

(Acts 16:27-29 NCV) The jailer woke up and saw that the jail doors were open. Thinking that the prisoners had already escaped, he got his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul shouted, "Don't hurt yourself! We are all here." The jailer told someone to bring a light. Then he ran inside and, shaking with fear, fell down before Paul and Silas.

(Acts 16:30-34 NCV) He brought them outside and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" They said to him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved-- you and all the people in your house." So Paul and Silas told the message of the Lord to the jailer and all the people in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then he and all his people were baptized immediately. After this the jailer took Paul and Silas home and gave them food. He and his family were very happy because they now believed in God.

Joshua and the jailer presented the choice of following the Lord to their families. The scriptures do not say if any in their families later rejected what had been preached to them, but at least all were given the opportunity to follow God. It was almost like the head of the household was giving an altar call to his family inviting them to be saved.

In a family that has both Christian parents living together this should be the mans job as leader of the family, but if only the woman of the household is a Christian or if their is no man in the family then she may have to do the leading. In any case it would be a good practice for every household in America to have their own private "altar call" their own opportunity to make a decision for Christ and receive salvation.

The Results Of Not Doing So

Eli the priest was himself a good and honest priest of the Lord and served in the temple. But, he was not a good leader of his family nor a good parent. He let his

sons run wild without disciplining them and by doing so his family lost their standing before God as priests in his temple.

(1 Sam 2:28-29 NIV) Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Did I not clearly reveal myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? I chose your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your father's house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?'

(1 Sam 2:30-36 NIV) "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever.' But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, in your family line there will never be an old man. Every one of you that I do not cut off from my altar will be spared only to blind your eyes with tears and to grieve your heart, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life. "'And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you--they will both die on the same day. I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my anointed one always. Then everyone left in your family line will come and bow down before him for a piece of silver and a crust of bread and plead, "Appoint me to some priestly office so I can have food to eat.'""

Eli did not have the courage to do a hard thing and tell his sons that if they did not mend their ways he would have them removed from their positions, and he had that power. By not doing so he ruined the potential service to the Lord for all generations in his family line. By not disciplining his sons and teaching them the ways of the Lord his grandsons and their children after them all suffered loss of opportunity forever.

The Results Of Eli's Lack Of Leadership

(1 Sam 4:10-11 NIV) So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty

thousand foot soldiers. The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

(1 Sam 4:12-16 NIV) That same day a Benjamite ran from the battle line and went to Shiloh, his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road, watching, because his heart feared for the ark of God. When the man entered the town and told what had happened, the whole town sent up a cry. Eli heard the outcry and asked, "What is the meaning of this uproar?" The man hurried over to Eli, who was ninety-eight years old and whose eyes were set so that he could not see. He told Eli, "I have just come from the battle line; I fled from it this very day." Eli asked, "What happened, my son?"

(1 Sam 4:17-22 NIV) The man who brought the news replied, "Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured." When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had led Israel forty years. His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near the time of delivery. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains. As she was dying, the women attending her said, "Don't despair; you have given birth to a son." But she did not respond or pay any attention. She named the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel"--because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

Disaster came upon Eli's family because of his lack of leadership. As a priest of Israel his problem was not that he did not know the word of the Lord, but that knowing it he did not perform it concerning his sons. Because of neglecting this duty his sons both died, he died, his sons wife died in childbirth, and they lost their family occupation as priests. All because he did not have family devotions. If he had brought his sons up well, and removed them from their offices when they sinned, none of those tragedies would have befallen him and his family.

(James 1:22 KJV) But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Keeping A Wife Under Control

It is a mans responsibility to keep his wife under control. This can be a very difficult thing, but it is a command of God. Some wives don't want to be under control, they want to run wild and do their own thing. This is America, and we can't stone a woman for disobeying her husband, nor do we want to. In this country we have to lead by example, by gentle persuasion, and by reasoning things out with a Christian woman from the scriptures. Not keeping a wife under control can have disastrous results, as Adam and Ahab found out.

(Gen 3:17 KJV) And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

(1 Ki 21:20-25 NIV) Ahab said to Elijah, "So you have found me, my enemy!" "I have found you," he answered, "because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD. 'I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel--slave or free. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.' "And also concerning Jezebel the LORD says: 'Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' "Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country." (There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, urged on by Jezebel his wife.

God gave the right for fathers and husbands to overrule bad decisions made by daughters and wives, and men are responsible before god to do so.

(Num 30:3-5 NIV) "When a young woman still living in her father's house makes a vow to the LORD or obligates herself by a pledge and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all her vows and every pledge by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her father forbids her when he hears about it, none of her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand; the LORD will release her because her father has forbidden her.

(Num 30:6-8 NIV) "If she marries after she makes a vow or after her lips utter a rash promise by which she obligates herself and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her, then her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband forbids her when he hears about it, he nullifies the vow that obligates her or the rash promise by which she obligates herself, and the LORD will release her.

(Num 30:9 NIV) "Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her.

(Num 30:10-13 NIV) "If a woman living with her husband makes a vow or obligates herself by a pledge under oath and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her and does not forbid her, then all her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband nullifies them when he hears about them, then none of the vows or pledges that came from her lips will stand. Her husband has nullified them, and the LORD will release her. Her husband may confirm or nullify any vow she makes or any sworn pledge to deny herself.

(Num 30:14-16 NIV) But if her husband says nothing to her about it from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or the pledges binding on her. He confirms them by saying nothing to her when he hears about them. If, however, he nullifies them some time after he hears about them, then he is responsible for her guilt." These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and his young daughter still living in his house.

If a man comes home from work and finds that his wife has bought a new \$2000.00 vacuum cleaner from a traveling salesman, he has the right to overrule that purchase. However, if he says nothing about it for a few days, the purchase stands. While the scriptures are not talking about vacuum cleaners here that is an example that is easy to understand and can be applied to everything else. A woman could make a vow to sell the house and give the proceeds to a television ministry, or decide to join a cult, or any other thing. The husband has not only the right, but the duty, to overrule such foolishness.

Women are more easily deceived than men, according to the scriptures. Eve was deceived, but Adam was not. Adam sinned because he loved his wife more than he loved God, but he was not deceived by the devil's lies. It is for this reason that God gives the husband the right to overrule his wife in decisions that affect the family.

(2 Cor 11:3 NIV) But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

(1 Tim 2:13-14 NIV) For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

Some Women Will Be Deceived By False Doctrine In The Last Days

(2 Tim 3:1-5 NCV) Remember this! In the last days there will be many troubles, because people will love themselves, love money, brag, and be proud. They will say evil things against others and will not obey their parents or be thankful or be the kind of people God wants. They will not love others, will refuse to forgive, will gossip, and will not control themselves. They will be cruel, will hate what is good, will turn against their friends, and will do foolish things without thinking. They will be conceited, will love pleasure instead of God, and will act as if they serve God but will not have his power. Stay away from those people.

(2 Tim 3:6-9 NCV) Some of them go into homes and get control of silly women who are full of sin and are led by many evil desires. These women are always learning new teachings, but they are never able to understand the truth fully. Just as Jannes and Jambres were against Moses, these people are against the truth. Their thinking has been ruined, and they have failed in trying to follow the faith. But they will not be successful in what they do, because as with Jannes and Jambres, everyone will see that they are foolish.

The Goal Of Every Family Should Be To Live In Peace

(Rom 12:18 NIV) If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

(Rom 14:17 NIV) For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

(Gal 5:22-23 NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

(1 Tim 2:2 KJV) For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

(1 Tim 2:2 NCV) Pray for rulers and for all who have authority so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives full of worship and respect for God.

(Titus 3:1-2 NIV) Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

(Heb 12:14 NCV) Try to live in peace with all people, and try to live free from sin. Anyone whose life is not holy will never see the Lord.

The goal of every family should be to live in Peace. This means that there should be peace in the household between husband and wife and the children if there are any. There should also be peace with the neighbors. There should be peace at work and in the church.

The parents in a household should not be causing strife and splits in the church. Not only is this a bad witness to the kids and to the community but it is against God's will. If a couple has problems with the leadership in a certain church they should just leave and find one they like rather than causing problems in that church.

Peace also means that a family should be at peace with the authorities, meaning the local police force, the state police and the federal government. Being a criminal is a bad witness to the family and the community. Being at peace with the government also means paying your taxes.

(Mat 22:17-22 NIV) Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

(Rom 13:6-7 NIV) This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Some Christian men are proud to follow Jesus but at the same time are proud to cheat Caesar out of his due. That is not a good witness for Christ, a good example for one's household, and it prevents God from giving full blessing on one's life. God cannot give us his full blessing when we disobey his word.

Early Christian Doctrine

Another job of the leader of a household, whether man or woman is to make sure that correct doctrine is taught in the household. Not every person can be an expert in biblical studies, but every one who knows how to read can stand up for the one paragraph doctrinal statement that was used in the early church to instruct new converts, This doctrinal statement is known as "The Apostles Creed."

The term heresy comes from the Greek word meaning "to choose" and generally refers to the willful rejection of the normative doctrines of a group by a member of that group. The history of Christianity is bound up with the history of heresy because the historic orthodox Creeds were formulated to correct what were believed to be erroneous teachings. The result of these early struggles was the emergence of the rule of faith embodied in what is now called the Apostles' Creed. Almost every line of this creed is directly aimed at some important heresy. The Software Toolworks Encyclopedia

It is affirmed by Ambrose "that the twelve Apostles, as skillful artificers assembled together, and made a key by their common advice, that is the creed; by which the darkness of the devil is disclosed, that the light of Christ may appear." It is believed that each disciple wrote one line of this creed. (Ambrose was an early writer of church history)

The Apostles Doctrine

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. Peter, | I believe in God the Father Almighty; |
| 2. John, | Maker of heaven and earth; |
| 3. James, | And in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord; |
| 4. Andrew, | Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; |
| 5. Philip, | Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; |
| 6. Thomas, | He descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead; |
| 7. Bartholomew, | He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; |
| 8. Matthew, | From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead; |
| 9. James Alpheus, | I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian Church; |
| 10. Simon Zealot, | The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins; |
| 11. Jude, | The resurrection of the body; |
| 12. Matthias, | Life everlasting, Amen" |

While it is not absolutely certain that the Apostles actually wrote this creed, nevertheless it is an early church document that reflects the true teaching of the scriptures in one short paragraph. The Apostles Creed is what this author believes in and it is a good test for anyone seeking to join a church to compare that churches doctrine against "The Apostles Creed." Any church teaching something other than what agrees with this creed is in error and in disagreement with the scriptures.

Jesus' Teaching On Christian Living

(Mat 6:1-4 NCV) "Be careful! When you do good things, don't do them in front of people to be seen by them. If you do that, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. "When you give to the poor, don't be like the hypocrites. They blow trumpets in the synagogues and on the streets so that people will see them and honor them. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. So when you give to the poor, don't let anyone know what you are doing.

Jesus Teaches About Prayer

(Mat 6:4-8 NCV) Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you. "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites. They love to stand in the synagogues and on the street corners and pray so people will see them. I tell you the truth, they already have their full reward. When you pray, you should go into your room and close the door and pray to your Father who cannot be seen. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you. "And when you pray, don't be like those people who don't know God. They continue saying things that mean nothing, thinking that God will hear them because of their many words. Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.

(Mat 6:9-15 NCV) So when you pray, you should pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven, may your name always be kept holy. May your kingdom come and what you want be done, here on earth as it is in heaven. Give us the food we need for each day. Forgive us for our sins, just as we have forgiven those who sinned against us. And do not cause us to be tempted, but save us from the Evil One.' Yes, if you forgive others for their sins, your Father in heaven will also forgive you for your sins. But if you don't forgive others, your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins.

(Mat 6:16-18 NCV) "When you give up eating, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They make their faces look sad to show people they are giving up

eating. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. So when you give up eating, comb your hair and wash your face. Then people will not know that you are giving up eating, but your Father, whom you cannot see, will see you. Your Father sees what is done in secret, and he will reward you.

Jesus Teaches On Earthly Treasures

(Mat 6:19-21 NCV) "Don't store treasures for yourselves here on earth where moths and rust will destroy them and thieves can break in and steal them. But store your treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is.

(Mat 6:22-24 NCV) "The eye is a light for the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. And if the only light you have is really darkness, then you have the worst darkness. "No one can serve two masters. The person will hate one master and love the other, or will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. You cannot serve both God and worldly riches.

(Mat 6:25-34 NCV) "So I tell you, don't worry about the food or drink you need to live, or about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothes. Look at the birds in the air. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. And you know that you are worth much more than the birds. You cannot add any time to your life by worrying about it. "And why do you worry about clothes? Look at how the lilies in the field grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that even Solomon with his riches was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. God clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today but tomorrow is thrown into the fire. So you can be even more sure that God will clothe you. Don't have so little faith! Don't worry and say, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' The people who don't know God keep trying to get these things, and your Father in heaven knows you need them. The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what God wants. Then all these other things you need will be given to you. So don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will have its own worries. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

This is good advice, but it only works if we follow the biblical principles for living and don't cause our own problems for tomorrow by sinful or unwise behavior today. In other words, we cannot run wild with credit card debt, refinance the house to buy a new Lexus, live royalty on a paupers income, and then say, "I'm

not going to worry about tomorrow, God will provide.” It’s God’s will and both new and old testament teaching that we live within our means and pay our tithes. If we do this, then we can count on God’s help when troublesome times come.

Don’t Co-Sign, Have Something In The Bank, And Stay Out Of Debt

Don't co-sign for anyone unless you are completely willing and have the money in the bank to pay for their purchase should it become necessary. Remember, if they were not a bad risk the bank would not wish to have a cosigner.

(Prov 22:26-27 NCV) Don't promise to pay what someone else owes, and don't guarantee anyone's loan. If you cannot pay the loan, your own bed may be taken right out from under you.

(Prov 6:1-5 NIV) My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, (Co-signed) if you have struck hands in pledge for another, if you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands: Go and humble yourself; press your plea with your neighbor! Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.

(Prov 6:6-11 NIV) Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest--and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

(Rom 13:8 KJV) Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

The leader of the home is responsible for keeping the family out of debt so that there is always a roof over the families heads, food in the cupboard, and clothing, heat, and everything necessary for the family’s support and welfare.

It’s A Man’s Job to Make Sure The Family’s Tithes Are Paid

Tithes must be paid up if a man wants the Lord’s blessing on his household.

(Mat 23:23 NCV) "How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You give to God one-tenth of everything you earn--even your mint, dill, and cumin. But you don't obey the really important teachings of the law--justice, mercy, and being loyal. These are the things you should do, as well as those other things.

(Mal 3:10 NCV) Bring to the storehouse a full tenth of what you earn so there will be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD All-Powerful. "I will open the windows of heaven for you and pour out all the blessings you need.

Husbands And Wives

(1 Pet 3:1-6 NCV) In the same way, you wives should yield to your husbands. Then, if some husbands do not obey God's teaching, they will be persuaded to believe without anyone's saying a word to them. They will be persuaded by the way their wives live. Your husbands will see the pure lives you live with your respect for God. It is not fancy hair, gold jewelry, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. No, your beauty should come from within you--the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that will never be destroyed and is very precious to God. In this same way the holy women who lived long ago and followed God made themselves beautiful, yielding to their own husbands. Sarah obeyed Abraham, her husband, and called him her master. And you women are true children of Sarah if you always do what is right and are not afraid.

Family Problems Can Hinder Prayers Being Answered

(1 Pet 3:7 NCV) In the same way, you husbands should live with your wives in an understanding way, since they are weaker than you. But show them respect, because God gives them the same blessing he gives you--the grace that gives true life. Do this so that nothing will stop your prayers.

Husbands And Wives Should Try To Reach Peaceful Agreement In All Things

(1 Pet 3:8 NCV) Finally, all of you should be in agreement, understanding each other, loving each other as family, being kind and humble.

(Eph 4:26-27 NIV) "In your anger do not sin" Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

All family disputes should be resolved before the end of the day. In the worst case scenario at least the couple can agree to disagree temporarily and set the matter aside until a win - win solution can be found.

Do Not Repay Evil With Evil Or Tell Lies or Blessings Will Be Lost

(1 Pet 3:9-12 NCV) Do not do wrong to repay a wrong, and do not insult to repay an insult. But repay with a blessing, because you yourselves were called to do this so that you might receive a blessing. The Scripture says, "A person must do these things to enjoy life and have many happy days. He must not say evil things, and he must not tell lies. He must stop doing evil and do good. He must look for peace and work for it. The Lord sees the good people and listens to their prayers. But the Lord is against those who do evil."

One Should Always Be Ready To Tell The Good News

(1 Pet 3:15 NCV) But respect Christ as the holy Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have,

A Soft or Gentle Answer Turns Away Wrath

(Prov 15:1 NCV) A gentle answer will calm a person's anger, but an unkind answer will cause more anger.

(1 Pet 3:16 NCV) but answer in a gentle way and with respect. Keep a clear conscience so that those who speak evil of your good life in Christ will be made ashamed.

Hollering, yelling, screaming and fighting are not the way God wants Christian couples to settle differences. Mature Christians should be able to find answers through prayer and through the scriptures without loud arguments. Those who do so show that they are babes in Christ and that they have no spiritual depth in their relationship with Christ.

Men Should Pray For God To Fix Things Rather Than Be Angry About It

(1 Tim 2:8 NIV) I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

Women Should Dress Modestly And Behave Well

(1 Tim 2:9-10 NIV) I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

Women Should Not Be Placed In Spiritual Authority Over Men In The Church

(1 Tim 2:11-12 NIV) A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

This does not mean that a woman cannot do church work. A woman may work in the church under the leadership of a male senior pastor. A woman may teach other women, children and even speak in the church while men are in the audience. Speaking as a guest speaker in a church where a male is the pastor, by his permission is acceptable. What the scripture says, is that a woman may not in the church leadership structure have authority over a man.

What Is The Reason For This?

Some may think that God is being unfair by giving the commands listed in the scriptures above. It is not God's desire to be unfair, but it is his will to have everything done decently and in order and to have an unblurred chain of responsibility.

God has given males and females different attributes. On a general basis, males are more analytical, and women are more emotional. These traits are not negatives, but positives for both. The male is analytical because as head of the household God gave him the mental and physical tools to provide shelter and an income for supporting the family. God gave to men more physical strength for hunting, home building and labor to make money. Of course, there are individual exceptions. Not many average men are stronger than a female competition weightlifter. But, on the whole, men are more suited to providing for the support of a household when outside the boundaries of civilization. In other words, if a group of 60 people, 30 men and 30 women, were dropped off to form a colony on a deserted island, most likely the men would find food and build shelters and the women would tend to the domestic matters. That is just the natural order of nature.

On the other hand, women have the more domestic traits a different emotional makeup from men. God gave women these gifts for the purpose of taking care of the home and the children. These gifts are good when used properly.

The problem comes in when the task is analyzing complex doctrines in the bible and in other situations in life. To make a clear decision in some things, to find the pure truth without a hint of compromise, every trace of emotion must be eliminated and one must only view the facts, and then a decision must be made accordingly. This decision must be made without any regard to who may have hurt feelings or worse. It is very difficult for most women to do that, to make a decision without involving any feelings.

Perhaps someone may suffer, even die if the truth is revealed about a certain matter. The mother almost always pleads for a sons life, even if he is a mass murderer sentenced to death by a court of law. In most cases the father would say that he deserves to die for his crimes. The examples in the scriptures show that very often tough decisions have to be made in the church and in the family, and those decisions must rely only on the word of God, with no emotion involved. It is almost impossible for most women to make a decision completely free of all emotional involvement, especially if it concerns her own children. It is not easy for a man either, but it can be done, if he really desires to follow God's word and will.

The point is that God has given women certain responsibilities and men certain responsibilities and has given both the tools they need to do them. As long as we work within the guidelines that God has given us, he will bless us. When we go outside of his plan we lose blessings that we might otherwise have received, both from the natural cause of not doing things in a wise manner and from the supernatural cause of God withholding his blessings as chastisement for our disobedience.

Note: There is nothing that prevents a man from giving his wife delegated authority over anything in the household. If the wife is a better money manager than the man he can say, honey, you manage the money, you are better at it than I am. In such a case, or in anything in the home, the woman is acting under the authority of the man by accepting the responsibilities that he has voluntarily given her. Also in the case of mental or physical illness a woman may need to run the home temporarily or even permanently until and after the husbands death. There is nothing wrong with this because she is not usurping authority from the man because he is not capable of performing that responsibility.

Why Shouldn't The Woman Lead The Home

Under Normal Circumstances?

(2 Cor 11:3 NIV) But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

As we saw earlier, Eve was deceived, but Adam was not. Adam sinned, but he did so knowingly. Because of a woman's more tender emotional makeup, a gift from God for nurturing the family, she is more easily deceived by tender heart rending emotional arguments from Satan. If you do not believe this you can prove it to yourself by investigating who watches, discusses and is more interested in soap operas, men or women. The women are more interested in the soaps because of their emotions and Satan uses these emotions to lead them down a primrose path, a path that can lead to destruction. For this reason a man should lead a family unit and in the churches whenever possible. Again, if there is no man available for the job there is no sin in a woman doing so until a man is available for it. But, when male leadership does become available she must give up the reins of power without complaint.

Men Must Accept God's Delegated Authority Willingly Or They Should Remain Single

If you, as a man, do not want and are not willing to accept this responsibility, the responsibility of home leadership, then you should not marry because there is no option in this matter. God has assigned it and that is all there is to it. If you don't perform your leadership responsibilities you will suffer loss of rewards for it at the judgment seat of Christ.

It is no different than a man who lets his wife take a part time job as an independent contractor of some sort, for example lets say doing seamstress work, and no taxes are withheld from her wages but an income statement is issued by the employer at the end of the year. If she makes \$15,000.00 and they file a joint return, and the husband made \$50,000.00 the husband is going to be just as responsible before the IRS as she is for the taxes on her income. Her income will be added to his and their total will be \$65,000.00.

This is how it is before God when a man takes a wife. He is not only responsible for his own actions, but for hers also. There are no excuses that are acceptable unless she runs off. Even then the man is responsible for the divorce if there was anything he could have done to prevent it. It is a mans responsibility to hold his marriage together and we will be judged by God for not doing so if we could have.

Of course, sometimes people just lose their minds and nothing can be done to reason with them. We are only responsible for things that we can or could have done something about, not by things that are beyond our control.

(Luke 12:48 NIV) But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Many do not take marriage seriously in this day and age, but it is a serious matter before God, and we have a better chance of making a marriage work if we follow God's plan for our lives as revealed in the scriptures rather than following our own vain ideas.

Just like a man is responsible on the tax return for his wife's income and the taxes due, so is a man responsible before God for the actions of his wife. At the judgment a man will have to answer not only for things he did in the body, but for what his wife did.

In all things, both in the church and in the home everything should be done decently and in order.

(1 Cor 14:40 KJV) Let all things be done decently and in order.

Guideline For Family Devotions

The purpose of this section is to assist the leader of the home in leading a time of family devotions in accordance with the scriptures.

Open with Praise and Worship

Throughout the bible it is the practice of all who come into the presence of the Lord to do so with praise and worship. For a full explanation on this subject please read "Happy, Joyous and Free." available on this website. Just a few scriptures will be shown here but there are many more.

(Psa 47:6-7 NIV) Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.

(Psa 147:1 NIV) Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

(Rom 15:11 NIV) And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples."

(1 Pet 2:9 NIV) But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

(Rev 19:5 NIV) Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"

Give Thanks For Blessings

(Psa 100:4 NIV) Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

(1 Chr 16:8-10 NIV) Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

(1 Chr 16:34 NIV) Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

(Mat 15:36 NIV) Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people.

(Eph 5:19-20 NIV) Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Phil 4:6 NIV) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

(Col 3:17 NIV) And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(1 Th 5:18 NIV) give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

If this is a difficult thing for some to do, that is having a time of praise and thanksgiving, a simple way to start is just to read and sing through the book of Psalms. The Psalms are full of praise and worship and thanksgiving. The verses above tell us to worship the Lord with Psalms.

Scripture Reading, Bible Study Or Devotional Reading

Praise and giving thanks may be followed by some type of devotional reading or study. This could be reading from the bible, from a devotional book or reading from any book concerning spiritual subject matter.

(Deu 4:8-9 NIV) And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

(Deu 11:18-19 NIV) Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

(Psa 25:4-5 NIV) Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

(Rom 15:4 NIV) For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

(Titus 2:1 NIV) You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

(2 Tim 2:15 KJV) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Prayer

A time of prayer should follow the time of study. The prayer time should include reviewing previous requests, updating the prayer list, and adding new items. Don't forget to include prayer for others, prayer for the pastor and church leaders and workers, prayer for the nation and its leaders, prayer for sicknesses, and prayer for needs and for special requests from others. A detailed study on prayer will be available in May 2004 on this website.

(Dan 9:18 NIV) Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.

(Eph 6:18 NIV) And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

(Phil 4:6 NIV) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

(1 Tim 2:1-3 NIV) I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all Godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior,

Make sure that prayer includes all of the aspects contained in The Lord's prayer, not in idle repetitious words, but including all of the aspects of the Lord's Prayer in format.

(Mat 6:9-15 NIV) "This, then, is how you should pray: "'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

1. Our Father - Recognizing who God is.
2. Who art in heaven - God is in heaven and we are on earth.
3. Hallowed be thy name - Hallowing God's name means recognizing his holiness. He is perfect, we are not.
4. Thy kingdom come - Remember that this world is not our home, God's kingdom in the future is.

5. Thy will be done - Pray that God's will be done on earth, heaven, and in our lives.
6. Give us this day our daily bread - Recognize that God is our provider and be thankful for it.
7. Forgive our debts - Forgive us for all of our sins through Christ.
8. As we forgive our debtors - We must also forgive those who have sinned against us.
9. Lead us not into temptation - Do not let us be tempted beyond what we can endure.
10. But deliver us from the evil one - Do not let us be ensnared by the wiles of the devil.
11. Forgive others - As God is merciful, so must we be also.

Close In Jesus Name

(John 16:23-24 NIV) In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Chapter 10: The Simple, Pure and True Gospel

Some say that the true gospel was lost and that they have found it. Some say that they have a NEW gospel. What they say doesn't matter. What matters is what Jesus (Yeshoua) said. John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

The gospel is neither lost nor is a new one needed or wanted. The true and pure gospel (good news) has been available for almost 2000 years. The true gospel is simple. Unlearned men began the preaching of it nearly 2000 years ago. You don't need a PhD to understand it.

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

The disciples of Jesus got their wisdom from being with Jesus and the empowering of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We (The Church) can and will do the same thing.

Matt. 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

The gospel, the simple true gospel. will be preached to all nations before the return of Jesus Christ, mostly by common folk, men and women. Paul explains that gospel, that message, in 1st Corinthians chapter 15.

The True Gospel - 1st Corinthians Chapter 15

Paul then reiterates the gospel that he preached to them, (The Corinthians) so there could be no misunderstanding on what their faith should be founded on. Paul gives in a few verses, a summary of the basic doctrines of Christianity.

Doctrine #1: We are saved by faith, by believing the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 NIV now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

Doctrine #2: Christ died for our sins, as predicted in the scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:3 NIV for what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures,

Doctrine #3: Christ was raised from the dead on the third day.

1 Corinthians 15:4 NIV that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures,

Doctrine #4: the resurrection was verified by the fact that Christ was seen alive by more than 500 people after his resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:5-8 NIV and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Doctrine #5: there will be a resurrection of the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:21-23 NIV for since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

Doctrine #6: there will be a second coming of Christ, and he will reign over heaven and earth.

1 Corinthians 15:24-25 NIV then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

Doctrine #7: death will be destroyed, we will have eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:26 NIV the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Doctrine #8: Christ will present the universe and everything in it to God the father, and all creation will be in unity with God.

1 Corinthians 15:27-28 for he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

Paul has given us a simple outline of the basic tenets of Christianity in one short chapter of the bible. This chapter contains everything anyone needs to know to both be saved themselves and to preach this gospel to others.

"Earnestly Contend For The Faith Once Delivered Unto The Saints"

Jude 1:3 (NKJV) Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Jude 1:3 (NIV) Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

The Apostles succeeded in delivering the true message, no new church with a different message is correct. The Faith that was delivered to the saints after Pentecost is the one we should contend for, the only one we should ever want or need.

1Cor. 1:23-24 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1Cor. 1:26-27 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

Do not feel bad if you are poor and uneducated by human standards. Although some Christians may be wealthy and highly educated, most are not. Heaven will be full of normal people while hell will be overflowing with those wise in the wisdom of this world, but not wise in the things of God.

1Cor. 2:1-2 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

2Cor. 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Gal. 1:8-9 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

SALVATION

If you have read this explanation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and would like to be reconciled to God right now you can be! Simply speak to God and say: Dear God, I believe Your Word, the Gospel. I believe in Jesus Christ. Forgive me all of my sins and make me into the kind of person you want me to be.

That's it. The rest is up to him. If you really meant it the Holy Spirit will come into your life and begin to change you. You will be a new person. Follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the scriptures and you will have an exciting journey through this life ahead of you and eternal life at the end.

(Titus 1:1-2 NIV) Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness-- a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot not lie, promised before the beginning of time,