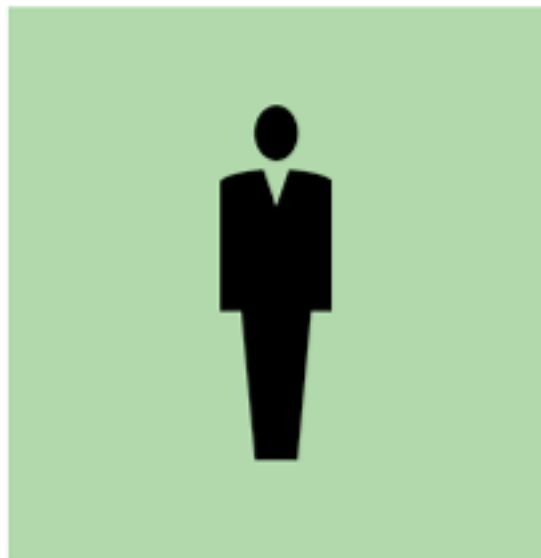


Marriage and Family

Singleness, Courtship, Marriage,
Divorce, and Sex
A Biblical Perspective



Preface

Our goal is to elucidate the subjects of marriage and family life. In it we will cover singleness, courtship, marriage, divorce/remarriage, sex, childbearing, child training, discipline, financial responsibilities, widows, widowers, and old age. It's not my intention to provide yet another study on marriage and family there is literally thousands and thousands of books on the subject already.

It's to be read with your Bible—have your Bible handy and look up the passages listed. It's a guide to help you read your Bible on these subjects. It's a companion to get us back to understanding what the Bible has to say about marriage and family. Moreover, it's a guide to help you understand what the Bible says about all the subjects in marriage and family. It will answer questions like, "should I physically discipline my child, and where is that found?" I pray this study will drive us into the Word of God so that His thoughts on marriage and family may be obeyed.

Again, this is a guide to marriage and family life as outlined in the scriptures. There are many books on each individual subject along with seminars, videos, tapes, magazines, newsletters, etc. I do not have all the answers to many of the complex problems of today's parents, but God's Word does. I would encourage you to share the Scriptures with children, young adults, widows, singles, married couples, divorced, and the aged. I would also encourage you, if need be, not to hesitate in obtaining other materials on the various different subjects.

For example, you may find it helpful to know the Bible teaches that the elderly are to be cared for, but you need to have more information on all the complex problems involved in it. This is where other Biblical resources would be conducive. A word of warning! Be careful of the resources you choose; make sure they are sound in doctrine.

There may be many things in this study that you never knew before. There may be things you already knew. If so, remember we must have a real reverence for God's Word and the authority it carries. So, as you begin to ask yourself if you believe God's Word. Then ask yourself if you will obey it without question? My deepest love and thanks to Jesus Christ our Lord for giving us life, and to my wife who has blessed me in many ways.

"Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you." (Philemon 1:8,9)

It is my prayer that you would be of such a Christ-like mind to understand what is the will of God regarding this subject (Romans 12:2). Those that walk in the flesh and not in the Spirit will say that these teachings are not valuable for the believer, for these they say, are a subtle form of legalism. It is by no means legalism, for the teaching is not foisted on anyone. Only for the spiritual life of the believer is the matter presented for consideration as a deep reflection of the inner spiritual life and observation of you who are born-again.

Let us be reminded what the Holy Spirit spoke through brother Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:2, **"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you."**

Ordinances and traditions of the Christian faith is NOT legalism as long as it is from God's Word. But praise be to God to be bound with such glorious and life-giving beauty, for **"know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?"** (Romans 6:16). It is obedience to righteousness that is the intent of the Spirit-filled life.

To accept truth resulting in strict obedience we must have a final authority; that final authority is the Lord Jesus. He is, by decree of

God and by His work of grace, declared to be the final authority (Hebrews 1:1,2; Matthew 17:5; Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

Jesus is the final authority in all the universe. Given this fact then, anything written in the letters or epistles (Acts-Revelation) should compliment, comment on, or expand on the words of Jesus they will not "override" the authority of Jesus.

Always remember the Old Testament is understood or interpreted in light of the New. There would be no need for a New Testament if the Old was valid in effecting our salvation. So when we speak about a teaching or doctrine we really want to know what Jesus says on the matter.

Singleness

"Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures." (Samuel Johnson (1709-84) British lexicographer. *Rasselas*, Ch. 261)

Singleness (in humans) means an unmarried person, or a person in a state of involuntary celibacy either male or female. Naturally, we are single until the time we marry; although, some may stay unmarried until death. In the beginning God did not mean for man to be alone:

And the LORD God said, [It is] not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him (Genesis 2:18).

It should be understood that man was created not evolved. Both male and female were created by God, and therefore accountable to him.

"So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27).

Looking at Genesis 2:18 again, we notice the word "help meet" in Hebrew it's *ezer* one who helps, or a helper. Originally, this word meant "a help suitable for him." God made the woman to be the exclusive helper to the man, and a companion to him. **"God said, [It is] not good that the man should be alone...."** Studies have shown singles are more likely to be depressed. Why? Because God has implanted a need to be united to the opposite sex. Let it be understood God did not make a man for a man. He made a woman for a man, and homosexuality and lesbianism are totally foreign to the scriptures. They are sins that need to be dealt with by repentance and conversion, and in no way can it be an accepted norm in our society.

It's interesting to see, from the scriptures, that God has much to say about remaining pure as a single person until marriage more on that later.

For some individuals the single life is hard for others it's not. Singles seem to feel like a "left shoe" in the body of Christ where groups and events are geared to married folks. However, this should not hinder one in his or her participation in those activities for if one is a true believer he will be so in love with Christ those feelings of awkwardness and isolation will not hinder them. I can say that I experienced the single life in Church and because of my love for Christ it never was a hindrance. The Word of God has an interesting portion in it of "vows to God" as a single person. It's found in Numbers chapter 30:2,3-5.

This means to make a vow or commitment of an offering unto the Lord binding or tying him or herself to that commitment. If a single woman vows a vow, and being under her father's authority, he decides it is not a suitable vow, for whatever reason, she will be dismissed from having to carry it out. This is not to say the woman can not make decisions for herself, but while under her father's household he is like insurance to see she doesn't make a vow she can't keep.

There are many passages that teach a woman is to marry, and is never discouraged. It is healthy for a woman to want to marry (Numbers 36:6; Joel 1:8; Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:27; 1 Corinthians 7:8,9,25-29, 32-40; 2 Corinthians 6:14). It must be stressed, that the Bible does not say whether one should or should not marry someone of another color or race. The Bible does say, one who is a child of God, must not marry out of the faith (Numbers 36:6; Judges 14:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14). This can, and will in many cases, cause severe trouble. It's for our benefit that God assigns these commands.

The Bible encourages a man to seek a wife. The same rules apply to him as was to the women in regards to race and faith (Deuteronomy 21:10-17; Judges 14:1-3; 16:4-20; Ruth 1:4; 2:10,11; Ecclesiastes 7:28; Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 29:6; Ezekiel 44:22; Matthew 19:4-6; 22:2; 1 Corinthians 7:8,9, 25-29, 32-40; 2 Corinthians 6:14). In Judges 16:4-20 it's indicating the wrong way of seeking a wife. Samson, not being serious in his faith, and is being deceived by the beauty of a woman. This serves as a lesson to those young men seeking a wife. It requires prayer, discernment, and a healthy time of getting to know the prospective wife. The Isaiah and Ezekiel passages deal with a man

marrying a virgin. The purity of both individuals coming together to live their lives, and create a family unit is a God designed plan that is to be sought after.

Singles are exhorted to remain pure until the day of their marriage (Deuteronomy 23:17; Judges 11:37; 16:1; 2 Samuel 13:1-36; Job 31:1,9; Psalm 119:9; Proverbs 5:1-8; 7:5-27; 11:22; 23:27,28; 29:3; 31:3,4; Ecclesiastes 2:1, 7:26; Jeremiah 31:3; Ezekiel 16:33-37; 23:2,3; 44:22; Daniel 1:8; Micah 7:5; Luke 1:34; 7:37; Acts 21:9; Romans 1:24,26-29; 2:22; 6:12-14,19; 12:1,2; 13:14; 1 Corinthians 5:1,2,11; 6:9-20; 7:1,2,8,9; 10:8; Galatians 5:19; 6:7,8; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5,7; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 1:27; Revelation 2:20; 14:4; 21:8; 22:15). With all of the above Scripture references how can a believer not stay pure? God has spoken we must obey.

The Bible exhorts us to be Godly from our youth. This means the believing parents are to discourage any activities that would be detrimental and ungodly to their children. The youth are to exhibit a character of Godliness and Holiness in their lives. It's impossible to describe the feeling of heartache and frustration in seeing a generation of youth become overrun by worldliness and ungodliness. Our youth and singles need to be reaching for holiness more and more (1 Samuel 13:14; Psalm 71:5,6; 112:1; 148:12, 13; Lamentations 3:22-33; Daniel 1:8; Luke 18:21).

Singles are to be wise and seek God (Proverbs 1:4,5,8-19; Matthew 6:33; Luke 18:29,30; Acts 20:9; Romans 12:1,2; Philippians 4:7,8).

Single women are to be gracious and virtuous (Proverbs 11:16; 31:10; Acts 9:36; 1 Timothy 2:9-15). The Bible gives warnings to those in their youth (single) and exhorts them to reach for God (Ecclesiastes 11:9,10; 12:1,13; Isaiah 54:4; James 1:13-16).

The whole book of the Song of Solomon is wonderful. It's rich content, not only allegorizes Christ and His Church, but provides the pureness of courtship and love. It would be a benefit for singles to read and glean the wonderful principles God has presented in it.

Singles are to exhibit an example of love and honesty (Zechariah 7:9; Luke 12:13-15; 1 Timothy 5:1,2; 1 Peter 5:5; 2 Peter 2:14).

It's important to know, especially in today's society, that the pressures of the single life are tremendous. Sexual temptations are everywhere thrown at us with brazen shamelessness and perversion. The benefits of desiring to marry, remain pure, choosing a partner carefully, exhibiting a Godly life, and so on are codified in God's Holy Word. In the above subjects God has spoken they cannot be ignored. As believers it's important to understand what God the Father wants from us. He has not left us orphans He has provided Truth for us to know.

Courtship

"A bachelor lives like a king and dies like a beggar." (L. S. Lowry (1887-1976) British painter. Attrib. 2)

In ancient times, and in many countries and cultures today, the custom of choosing a wife or husband by the parents is practiced. This seemed to be done so as the young adults were placed together with someone the "discerning" parents thought best for them. In many countries where this is practiced often times, the arrangement turns out to be a disaster. In many cases, arranged marriages are still binding even if one of the parties moves to another country. Often times this results, especially in America, in one of the parties coming to a free country and the arranged spouse comes over also only with the intentions of becoming a citizen by marriage and then braking it off.

Many times the young couples knew each other from childhood and were allowed to grow and interact with each other over the years, building a bond and closeness for the future. In our culture "arranged" marriages are not the norm. However, the principle of courtship and the desire for two young people to become man and wife are exhibited in such passages of Scripture.

The Bible is clear men and women are to choose their partners. Again, I would stress this must be done by lots and lots of prayer, and the leading of God. We must remember the prohibition as to the choice of a partner (Numbers 36:6; Judges 14:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14) that is only in the faith. The choice must be made by biblical standards (Genesis 6:2; 21:21; 24:3,4, 61-67; 28:1,2,6; 38:6; Exodus 2:1; Numbers 36:6; Deuteronomy 24:1-5; Ruth 1:4,11,13; Proverbs 5:18-23; 18:22; 30:19; Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 29:6; Ezekiel 44:22; Matthew 1:18; 6:33; 22:2; Luke 1:27; 14:8; 17:27; 1 Corinthians 7:28,30-38; 2 Corinthians 6:14).

This choosing of a wife or husband must not be done so out of spite for one's parents (Genesis 26:34,35).

There is a wrong way of securing a wife or husband (Genesis 34:1-4; Judges 16:4-20; 2 Samuel 13:1-36; Proverbs 9:13-18; Ecclesiastes 7:26,28; 2 Corinthians 6:14).

The custom of some kind of "dowry" was given (Genesis 34:12). This exists in many cultures today. In America, it's likened to parents of the bride paying for all the wedding arrangements. The dowry was given to secure the commitment to the woman by the man, but it was also compensation to her parents.

For in ancient times the removal of a woman from the household constituted some loss, such as, she was most likely a worker and brought in income to the household and therefore a loss of that income would occur. Women left their house and went to live with the groom and his parents, thus contributing to that household. Men never lived with the bride's parents.

In the book of Ruth, Ruth, and Boaz, begin a relationship and courtship that was Holy and innocent (chapters 2,3). Unlike today, where sleeping around and living together is common. The whole book of Song of Solomon is a wonderful exhortation to Godly courtship and romance. In courtship, couples must remain pure at all costs (Romans 6:12). In 1 Corinthians 7:1,2 we read:

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: [It is] good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, [to avoid] fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says, [It is] good for a man not to touch a woman. What does the word touch mean? It's Haptomai meaning to fasten one's self to, adhere to, cling to, of carnal intercourse with women or cohabitation. What he is saying is that it's not good or right for a man, or woman, to cohabitant or have sex before marriage. How do we know this? Nevertheless, [to avoid] fornication, let every man

have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Very clear in our courtship God desires men and women not to live together or sleep together until marriage.

Marriage

"He that loves not his wife and children, feeds a lioness at home and broods a nest of sorrows." (Jeremy Taylor (1613-67) English Anglican theologian. Sermons, "Married Love.")

Marriage is a divine institution ordained and created by God. It was created twofold, one, the need for man to have female companionship (Genesis 2:18). Two, to fulfill the command to procreate and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). Marriage is work, it's responsibility to each other. It's not a shoe to try on and then abandon because it gets tight as time goes on.

God intended it to be Holy and pure with no pollution or regrets. I'm convinced that when we submit ourselves to the will of God, and all that He would have for us including marriage, we can find a marriage partner for life. The main reason so many marriages end up in a disaster is that of one, or both, partners is selfishness and lust! For example, a man has a beautiful wife, she is a stay at home mom, devoted to him and their children serves him without complaining, and is in love with her husband. However, one day he is having lunch with his secretary (first mistake) he feels it's innocent and kept on a professional level. The secretary, during this lunch, has expressed personal problems to him and has said some things that filled a void he never thought he had.

The next week they go to lunch again (second mistake and fatal error) again, more "professional conversations" ensue. This time in the parking lot she begins to cry from a load of problems, feeling bad he put his arm around her to comfort her, (third error) they embrace and return to work. Upon the third meeting, they find themselves in bed. What has happened? This man was not careful in his actions, and his lust and selfishness have landed him in the arms of another woman.

This is a very common story repeated almost daily in the United States. As a result, the break down of marriages and the number of divorces has skyrocketed. The attacks of Satan can and will come from anywhere. One must be ever cautious in dealing with the opposite sex when married. We must understand marriage is wonderful in the sight of God, and to hate it is to call the work of God refuse.

Let me say, it's God's desire that we do not sin (1 John 2:1; 3:6) and that we keep ourselves from pollution. There may be those that are reading this and saying I have sinned I committed fornication, adultery, sexual sins, divorce, and so on. Please remember God forgives sin! This is not a license to go and commit these acts absolutely not! Only for you to realize if these things have happened to you, and you're broken over it, you must repent! God will forgive you. You must stop your sinning, confess to God, and turn from your sins.

The instituting of marriage (Genesis 2:23-25; 5:2; in Genesis 24:67 the consummation of marriage is completed by sexual union; not by a mere license, 25:1; Numbers 36:6; Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 29:6; Joel 2:16; Luke 1:27; 14:8; 17:27; John 2:12). After the fall we see the roles defined by God judgment on Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:16,17;.12:11-13,18,19).

What is not proper or right within a marriage (Genesis 12:11-13,18,19; 16:3; 20:3,4-9; 26:6-11; 30:4; 38:7-9 why? this is defrauding one another see 1 Corinthians 7:5; 39:6-12; Leviticus 19:20,29; 20:10-21; 21:7; Numbers 5:11-31 in this narrative is given for a discouragement to adultery, Deuteronomy 5:18,21; 22:22; 24:1-5; 25:11,12; Judges 19:1-21; 2 Samuel 5:13; 2 Samuel 6:20-23; Ezra 9:1,2; Nehemiah 13:23-27; Job 2:9; 31:9,10; Proverbs 6:32; 7:5-27; 9:13-18; 19:13; 21:9,19; 22:14; 23:27,28; 25:24; 27:15; 29:3; 30:20-23; Isaiah 3:12; Jeremiah 3:8,20; 5:8; 7:9,30,34; 8:10; 29:23; 44:9,15-19; Ezekiel 13:17-23; 16:32-38; 18:6; 22:10,11; 33:26; 44:22; Amos 2:7; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 1:19; 5:27, 28-32; 14:3; 19:3-12,18; Mark 6:17,18; 7:20-22; 10:19; Luke 3:19; 18:20; John 4:15-18; 8:3-11; Acts 5:1-10; Romans 2:22; 6:12-14,19; 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 5:1,2; 6:9,13,15,16; 10:8; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 5:19; 6:7,8; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5;

1 Timothy 2:9-15; 4:3; James 1:13-16; 2:11; 4:4; 2 Peter 2:14; Revelation 2:20).

What is proper and good in marriage (Genesis 25:21; 29:18 without love in a marriage a marriage will fail 34:3; Numbers 30:6-8,10-16; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 2:19-21; 25:2-44; Psalm 113:9; 127:3-5; 128:3-6; Proverbs 5:18-23; 11:16; 12:4; 13:22; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 30:19; all of chapter 30; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Hosea 3:1-3; Joel 1:8; Matthew 6:33; 22:2; 24:38; 27:19 the true advice of a wife could be taken; Luke 1:6; 14:26 and 18:29 means to have a relationship with Christ first; John 3:29; Acts 18:1-3, 26 is for a husband and wife to share the gospel together; Romans 12:1,2; 13:14; 1 Corinthians 6:17-19; 7:2,3-16,33-40; 9:5; 11:3-15; 14:34,35; 2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 5:22,23; Philippians 4:7,8; Colossians 3:18,19; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 1 Timothy 3:2,11; Titus 1:6; 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

The law concerning rape and a subsequent marriage (Exodus 22:16,17; 11:1-5; 13:1-36; 1 Kings 11:1-11).

The Godly advice of an in-law is to be respected (Exodus 18:1-24).

Polygamy is mentioned in the Bible; however, it's not condoned even from the beginning it was not the intended way of marriage. It does cause problems and is illegal in this country. The believer is to never engage in this activity (Deuteronomy 21:15; 1 Samuel 1:1,2; 2 Samuel 5:13).

The "levirate law" was intended to keep the Hebrew line pure and alive (Deuteronomy 25:5-10) because of the obvious reasons we do not practice this custom.

A prudent wife is a gift from God (Proverbs 19:14). To find a good wife is to obtain favor from the Lord (Proverbs 18:22).

The whole book of the Song of Solomon is a wonderful description of love, passion, and romance.

Marriage is only intended for the time we are on this earth (Matthew 22:30; 24:38; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34,35).

Unto the Married

"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [them] at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matthew 19:4-6)

These are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ; which is God's final revelation to man (Hebrews 1:1,2). His words include everything for marriage. For Christians when you talk about marriage you're talking about a very old subject—"that he which made [them] at the beginning...."

As long as man has been on the face of the earth so has marriage. It is a union between a man and a woman instituted by God Himself. If you are married stop for a moment and pray. Think about your marriage and what can be changed to make it better. As always we endeavor to stick with what the Scriptures say, not me but what God has to say, and it is Him in which we receive answers.

Where did marriage come from?

When we discuss marriage, the Christian marriage, there are some things we need to make clear.

First, as professing Christians we must understand God created and installed marriage for us (see Genesis 1:28; 2:18,23,24; Proverbs 18:22).

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the

air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

Notice in this passage God blesses them and asks them to procreate the earth for Him. And in Genesis 2:18 it says, "I will make him an help meet for him." It's clear God created marriage.

God's word is true and authoritative

Second, we must understand that God is God, and what He says we must obey without question. It is so vital we understand that His word is to be obeyed, believed, and trusted (Exodus 19:3-5; Deuteronomy 11:26,27; 13:4; 27:10; Matthew 7:24-27; Acts 5:29; 2 Thessalonians 3:14).

God's word that has come to us in the Scriptures must be trusted and obeyed. The Bible is both without error and authoritative. For if we do not believe in the word of God, we'll be prone not to believe Him either. See: Daniel 10:21; John 2:22; 10:35; Galatians 4:30; 2 Timothy 3:16; James 4:5; 2 Peter 1:20,21.

When we speak of "without error" we mean that all the doctrines, revelations, and theology in the original manuscripts were without error and the faithful copies from which the King James was translated. The best version is the King James. It is worthy to note that when Jesus was confronted by the religious leaders, because they regarded not the Scriptures, He said, "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." So we would do well to heed the Word of God. See 2 Peter 3:16; Revelation 22:18,19; Matthew 4:4,7,10; Romans 2:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 1 Peter 3:1; 4:17.

Now that we have established that God's word is true, trustworthy, and authoritative we must realize. 1) God created marriage. 2) His word is to be obeyed and trusted. 3) His word must be authoritative in all areas of our life.

We have seen where marriage comes from and why (Genesis 2:18). God made man first then He made the woman for the man (Genesis 2:22). God made the woman for the man, not the other way around.

Now some women will be saying "we are liberated, we're in the 21 century, you don't believe we should listen to our husbands?" Yes, we do.

Most of the problems in Christian marriage comes because the man and the woman do not know their roles in the Christian marriage. The man does not know his role and neither does the woman. Jesus said, "at the beginning made He them male and female." Let's look a little closer at what happened at the beginning to try and better understand this.

In Genesis, the fall of mankind into sin has just occurred, and God is delivering His judgment upon all involved, He comes to the sentence for the crime upon the woman represented by Eve.

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Genesis 3:16)

Notice the sentence upon the woman comes just after satan's sentence, being the initiator of the rebellion, and before the man. This is because Satan deceived Eve then Adam sinned. Notice the phrase.

"...and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Let's look at a couple of words, desire, and rule. First, desire (*teshooaw*) in Hebrew means a longing, a stretching after. Second, the word rule (*mawshal*) means to have dominion over, govern, reign, or to have power over.

The judgment of Eve (representing all women) by God was, **"...and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."** To put it another way, "...and thy desire (longing for, stretching out after) [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule (have dominion, govern, have power) over thee."

Remember it's God who passed this judgment. One reason women don't like this passage is, not that they don't want to obey God, but be-

cause they don't want to obey their husbands. They would rather listen to Satan's lies than God's appointed man for them. If we resist this we're fighting what God has placed as judgment, and this curse can never be altered. I would challenge anyone to find a verse in God's word that annuls this fact. So what do we do with this? How do we handle this? We obey it regardless what the world, satan, or anyone else says. Now, let's look at the judgment of Adam.

"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." (Genesis 3:17)

We notice harsh judgment dealt to Adam. Notice he, hearkened unto the voice of thy wife. He broke the commandment of God—the only one God give to him. And he must work the rest of his life in toil. The word hearkened (*shama*) in Hebrew means to listen, obey, regard, or understand. Adam literally obeyed the voice of his wife; which he knew to be wrong because it resulted in breaking God's word.

Because of the fall, they were now subjugated to a chain of command and natural order that is to be obeyed. 1 Corinthians reiterates this as well—God, man, woman, children. As the woman took upon herself authority, and as the man submitted to it, it's now the reverse women are to be subject to men. If some women are upset about this they should remember they were deceived in the beginning, and just as the man must suffer the consequences of his actions so must the women.

Biblical New Testament Marriage

Marring and marriage how was it conducted? How was it done in the New Testament era? Was there some formula that the body of Christ instituted? In lands, states, or countries is there laws for marriage and how to perform them? Let's look at marriages from the beginning. In the patriarchal period, wives were sought for sons by his father's ser-

vants. The purpose was 1) to maintain social continuity. 2) the perpetuation of the group (Genesis 1:28).

It was much the same in the exodus-settlement period as was in the patriarchal period. Moreover, during this time polygamy was not uncommon (Judges 8:30). Much of the same practices remained through the monarchy period. However, in the exile return period, we see a change, such as the divorce of Israelite wives for indigenous women, for two reasons. 1) Social Acceptability. 2) Assured title to the lands.

By the New Testament time weddings and marriages were celebrated with a wedding feast, the bride was brought to the wedding by the groomsman, while the groom was accompanied by the bridesmaids, a steward was placed in charge of the arrangements, festivities, and the parceling out of wine. To separate these activities from other events that might have been going on at the same time special garments were required for admission to the wedding.

So throughout the Old Testament times and into the New, the type of marriage stayed the same. This is also consistent with the Lord Jesus (John 2:1-10; Matthew 22:1-13; Matthew 25:1-10). In the gospels this type of wedding is mentioned seven times (Matthew 22:3,8,10,11,12; Luke 12:36; 14:8).

Among the Jews, the marriage supper took place in the husband's house and was a great social family event. There was hospitality and resentment at the refusal of an invitation (Matthew 22:1-14). The marriage in Cana exhibits the way in which a marriage feast was conducted in humbler homes.

So what about vows in the New Testament times? Did people in both Old and New Testaments take what we call marriage vows? What did God do when He married Adam and Eve? (Genesis 2:22-24 see also Genesis 1:28).

We know that marriage is for one man and one woman for life. So any "promises" made should be upheld as sacred. Were told not to "vow" so we must honor marriage and keep our spouse as we declared we would.

Divorce/Remarriage

"So that ends my first experience with matrimony which I always thought a highly overrated performance." (Isadora Duncan)

As we study divorce and remarriage it must be understood that marriage is God designed and instituted. See also the divorce study.

It's a sacred Holy institution that must not be entered into lightly, nor taken so lightly that the escape of divorce is conceived as good. The Bible says, no matter how one interprets it, that divorce is wrong, God hates it, and it's a sin. The Bible is clear one man one woman for life. Is there divorce in the world? Yes, at a sickening rate. Is there divorce in the Christian community? Yes, to the embarrassment of Christianity.

There is an ongoing debate over the "reasons" there might, or might not be, a divorce between believers. As I have said the Bible says, no matter how one interprets it, that divorce is not good, God hates it, and it's a sin. That must be clear in our minds. There are generally four reasons people divorce. One, I do not love and cannot live with this person anymore. Two, I have fallen in love with someone else. Three, he or she is abusive to me either verbally, physically, mentally, or emotionally. Four, he or she has left me and has not returned. All other reasons would be petty and not worth mentioning.

Everything is tied to Godly singleness, courtship, and marriage. In other words, if the foundation is sand the whole building will crumble. There are many factors that can cause one of the above problems, i.e. marrying too young, not knowing the person well enough, marriage for sex, marriage for getting out of the home, etc. Divorce must not be an option in marriage. We must remember we are people with a will—we are free to make choices despite what we may or may not know to be true.

If a person commits divorce, but he or she was not aware of the prohibition in the Bible, because they have been taught wrong are they guilty? The answer is yes. One would be guilty because it's a sin; however, that sin would be eventually revealed to you, as wrong by God, and thus it would need to be repented of.

A believing couple should not seek divorce as an option out of marital problems. They must understand it's a sin and must not be entered into. It would be, if the situation has come to the extreme end and all avenues have been virtually exhausted, to opt for separation. However, this should be not as a prelude to divorce but a time of reflection and reconciliation. Just as fellow believers are excommunicated from the Church for a time the same would be true in a marriage. The end result would be reconciliation with each other and a rebuilding of commitment and trust. In cases of abandonment and physical abuse separation, for the later has already occurred, but for the former, it may be needed for physical safety. At this point, if no reconciliation can be accomplished a permanent separation, not a divorce, may be needed, and either party must remain single. Let me outline this subject. Marriage is a holy divine institution ordained by God. It must be between one man and one woman forever. Divorce should never be sought to resolve problems. It's a sin. Separation may be needed, if after all means have been exhausted, both parties should remain single. No divorce should occur.

In the Old Testament the Priests were not to take a wife that had been divorced (Leviticus 21:7,14; Ezekiel 44:22) it's clear there were divorced women—and logically following men as well—divorce was not "uncommon." If it had been, there would have been no mention of it (Numbers 30:9). The unfortunate fact is, for whatever reason, divorce did occur. This is not to say it's acceptable only that it did occur.

We read in Deuteronomy 24:1-5:

" When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of

divorcement, and give [it] in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's [wife]. And [if] the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth [it] in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her [to be] his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that [is] abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance."

Let us look carefully at this. It says, when a man hath taken a wife, and married her...clearly, they are married. The word for married (*ba'al*) means just that to possess, to own, or to marry. This is not the Hebrew word for "betrothed" (*'aras*) which means betroth, espouse, or engage. We have here a couple that is married not betrothed/engaged. This is also evident by the phrase and it come to pass—after some time plus the word married is in the Hebrew perfect tense -- a completed action. And it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes why? Because he hath found some uncleanness in her. The word found (*matsa*) means to find out, to learn, to detect, to be encountered, or be discovered. In other words, he has married her and finds out she has some uncleanness, (*ervah*), pudenda (implying shameful exposure), indecency, or improper behavior. This is not simply some wrong thing she may have said or done, but a more serious change of shameful exposure sexually and possibly adultery!

"And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness [with another] instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse" (Numbers 5:9). It then says, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give [it] in her hand, and send her out of his house. Because of these grounds a man could send her out -- divorce her. Under-

stand this is not for "any reason" and is still, according to the Lord Jesus, wrong (Matthew 19:8). **And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's [wife]. This is she may be remarried. And [if] the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth [it] in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her [to be] his wife...** this precept is not being permitted for some "uncleanness" but for just hating her, or if he dies, he could divorce her. If this occurs her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife... why? Because after that she is defiled; for that [is] abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin.... So it's clear divorce, as with polygamy, was present, but not an ideal situation. God put up with it but in the end he still did not intend it to be so (Matthew 19:8). What do we say about this? One must remember we always interpret the Old Testament in light of the New never the reverse. God has spoken by Jesus Christ that it was "...from the beginning not so."

Pagan wives were put away (Ezra 10:3) this is not to imply a Christian married to a non-believer should do this. Jeremiah 3:1 is recapitulating Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

God compares His judgment to that of divorce in (Jeremiah 3:8; 8:10).

Divorce by a woman from her husband is considered a treacherous thing (Jeremiah 3:20).

In times of sinfulness in a nation, God's judgment came in the form of wives being given to another is exemplified (Jeremiah 8:10).

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:14-16).

It is wrong (Matthew 5:31,32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke. 16:18; John 4:15-18; Romans 7:1-4; Galatians 6:7,8).

The passages that teach on this is clear—divorce is a sin. There is no getting out of interpreting them it's to be avoided. It's not something one should entertain in one's thoughts. Believers are to never seek a divorce.

Sex

"My beloved put in his hand by the hole [of the door], and my bowels were moved for him." (Song of Solomon 5:4)

Sex is a wonderful, beautiful, sacred, fulfilling experience shared between a married couple. It's not to be polluted, cheapened, made dirty, or exploited. Because sex is such a high "feeling orientated" sense it has been greatly abused and abased by satan. What is the holiest and blessed union humans can have designed by the Creator; Satan has made it out to be disgusting. Sex is reserved for married couples. Sex outside of the holy union of marriage is sinful, fornication, and corrupt. A man and woman's virginity is sacred. It's the one thing you are born with, can be lost, and never recovered. It's a gift to your spouse that can only be given once, never cheapen that-- reserve it for the God-ordained person He has chosen for you.

There are two reasons for sex. One, to share with your husband or wife that intimate love and oneness of expressing that love without words. It's a pleasure from God and should be treated as such--holy! Two, to procreate the human race and build Godly families. God does not go into detail about the manner of sex in the scriptures. There are; however, many principles that speak as to what is not Godly in sex. We are to never engage in sex acts with our partner that is considered unclean and unholy.

What is good and proper sex (Genesis 4:25; 12:19; 16:4; 24:67; 26:8; Leviticus 21:13; Proverbs 5:18,19; 30:19; Matthew 1:25; Luke 1:34; Acts 21:9; Romans 6:12-14,19; 12:1,2; 13:14; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5,9; Philippians 4:7,8; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 13:4(a); Revelation 14:4).

What is wrong and sinful (Genesis 16:2, 19:5,7,8,31-36; 34:2,7; 38:9,10; 39:6-12; Exodus 20:14,17; 22:16,19; Leviticus 18:6-24,29,30; 20:10-21; 21:9; Numbers 5:11-31; Deuteronomy 5:18,21; 22:5, 13-30;

23:17,18; 24:1; Judges 16:1; 19:1-21,22-30; 1 Samuel 2:22; 2 Samuel 13:1-36; Proverbs 5:20-23; 6:32; 7:5-27; 23:27,28; 29:3; 30:20; Jeremiah 5:8; 7:9; 29:23; the whole book of the Song of Solomon; Ezekiel 16:32-38; 18:6; 22:11; 23:2,3; 33:26; Hosea 3:1-3; Amos 2:5-7; Micah 7:5; speaking of adultery Matthew 14:4; 15:19; Mark 6:22-26; 10:19; Luke 3:19; 7:37; 18:20; John 4:15-18; 8:3-11; Romans 1:24,26,27,29; 2:22; 1 Corinthians 5:1,2; 11:6; 9:13,15-19; 10:8; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 1:9,10; Hebrews 12:16; 13:4(b); James 1:13-16; 2:11; 4:4; 2 Peter 2:14; Jude 7; Revelation 21:8; 22:15).

God speaks about menstruous women and that it's not right to approach her during that time of the month (Isaiah 30:22; Leviticus 18:19; 20:18; Ezekiel 22:10; Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43).

God speaks about eunuchs (Matthew 19:12) what is a eunuch? The Greek word (*Eunouchos*) means an emasculated man one naturally incapacitated. In other words, a man that has been castrated and unable to have sex.

Childbearing

"And God blessed them [Adam and Eve], and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply..." (Genesis 1:26)

The point of this section is to have us understand that God desires us to bear children. Bearing children is a biological function of the human body; designed by the Creator for women only. Married couples should bear children. God has not spoken on the issue of contraceptives in the Scriptures; however, this does not mean He is for it.

Many have said, "It is an issue for couples to decide." No, it's a decision that must involve God, and if He is not for it He may well be against it. Many contraceptives kill the yet fully formed child. Using a contraceptive is in realty stopping a pregnancy; which is abortion in the earliest stage. God has said,

"Lo, children [are] an heritage of the LORD: [and] the fruit of the womb [is his] reward. As arrows [are] in the hand of a mighty man; so [are] children of the youth. Happy [is] the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3-5).

As Christians, we are not to seek to stop the blessings of God. We are to never abort children. In our modern day, there are many excuses as to why a couple will not continue to have children, they are neither logical nor Biblical if you can produce children, as God would give you, there is no reason to not do so. In our day and age, the question is asked can couples with fertility problems seek means medically to have children? (i.e. test tube, artificial insemination, surrogate, etc.) that is a very difficult ethical question to answer. Again, one would have to be very careful as to the particular method.

It has come to the point that the medical community has discovered how to create either a male or female fetus using such technology. One would not hesitate to condemn this practice for that is playing God. We can say we are to produce children it's a gift from God, and we are not to hinder nor abort that process premeditatively.

What about adoption? That is a wonderful option that would not be condemned. What better example do we have than that of God our Father adopting us (Galatians 5:4). We are to produce and care for children (Genesis 1:28; 3:16; 4:1,25,26; 6:1; 9:1,7; 16:4,5; 17:16,17;18:10; 21:1-4,7; 25:21,24; 30:5; Exodus 2:2; Leviticus 12:1-8; Judges 13:3-7,24; Ruth 4:13; 1 Samuel 1:20-24; 2 Samuel 11:5; Psalm 71:5,6; 113:9; 127:3-5; 128:3-6; 131:2; 144:12; 148:12; Proverbs Ch.31; Ecclesiastes 11:5; Isaiah 1:2; 11:8; 21:3; 26:17,18; 45:10; 49:1,5,15; 60:4; 66:7-13; Jeremiah 1:5,6; 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 29:6; 30:6; 31:8; 48:41; 49:24; 50:43; Ezekiel 16:4,5; 18:10(a), 14(b); Micah 4:9,10; Matthew 1:25; Luke 1:24,36,37,57; 2:7,21(b),23; 8:42; John 16:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:7,11; 5:3; Hebrews 11:11; 1 Peter 2:2; Revelation 12:2).

Couples can be childless for a time (Genesis 15:2; 16:1; Judges 13:3; 1 Samuel 1:1,2; 2 Samuel 6:20-23; Psalm 113:9; Isaiah 32:11,12; 54:1; Luke 1:7,25,36,37; 23:29).

Adoption, foster parents, orphans (Genesis 15:3; Exodus 2:7; Proverbs 23:10; Jeremiah 7:6; 49:11; Acts 7:21).

Children should be circumcised (Genesis 15:3; Exodus 4:24-26; Leviticus 12:3; Luke 2:21).

There is the use of a midwife/nurse (Exodus 1:15-21; 2:7; Ruth 4:16).

No abortion (Deuteronomy 21:31; 18:10; Psalm 94:21; 106:37,38; Proverbs 6:17; Isaiah 49:15; 57:5; 59:7; 66:9; Jeremiah 7:6,31; 19:4,5; 22:17; 32:35; Ezekiel 20:26,31,32; 23:37; Hosea 1:3-9; Matthew 2:16; Acts 7:19).

Children can be demon-possessed (Mark 7:25-30; Luke 9:38,39).

Child Training

"... Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:14)

The most important training we should give our children is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. It is our duty to train our children to be productive, useful, Godly men and women. God stresses, abundantly, the need for training our children in the ways of the Lord. Today, many parents send their children into Sunday School classes because they have not, and do not, train them themselves. Child training involves more than just the ways of God; it's training them, Biblically, to behave, be respectful, courteous, helpful, kind, loving, etc. We want to train our children to carry the Gospel and the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ into their generation. Let's not allow our children to be the vessels of 2 Timothy 3:1-4.

Adam should have trained his son better (Genesis 4:9).

We should not show favoritism (Genesis 25:28; 37:34).

We are to bring our children up in the ways of the Lord God (Genesis 18:19; 21:20; Exodus 20:12; 21:15,17; Leviticus 19:3,17; 20:9; Deuteronomy 4:9,10; 5:16,29; 6:7; 12:12; 16:11; 31:12,13; Joshua 4:5-7; 22:23-29; Judges 13:3-7,24; 1 Samuel 2:18; 3:1,19-21; 2 Kings 12:2; Nehemiah 12:43; Esther 2:7; Job 1:5; Psalm 71:5,17; 78:4; 89:1,30-32; 90:16; 102:18,28; 103:17; 107:8,15,21,31 four times; 112:2; 119:9; 132:12; 144:12; Proverbs 1:4,5,8-19; chapter two; 3:11,12; chapter four; 6:20-29; 10:1,5; 13:1; 14:26; 15:5,20,21; 19:27; 20:7,11,29; 22:6; 23:19,22-26; 29:3(b),17; Ecclesiastes 12:1,13; Isaiah 54:13; 59:21; Jeremiah 2:9; 3:4; 32:39; Ezekiel 4:14; 18:19,20; 22:7; Daniel 1:17; Joel 2:15,16; Malachi 1:6; Matthew 7:9-11; 11:16,17; 18:1-10,14; 19:13,14,19; 21:28-31; Mark 9:36,37; 10:13-15; Luke 2:40,51; 7:32; 9:47,48; 11:11,12; 15:11-32; 18:15-17,20,21; Acts 7:20; 20:9; 21:9; 2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:1-4; Philippians 4:7,8; Colossians 3:20,21; 1 Thessa-

lonians 2:11; 3:4,12; 5:1,2; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2:22; 3:15; Titus 1:6; 2:6; Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Peter 5:5).

Those not trained well (Genesis 17:1-4; 21:9; 1 Samuel 2:12,17; 2 Samuel 15:1-6; Job 19:18; Psalm 78:8; Proverbs 17:25; 19:13(a),26; 20:20; 22:15; 28:24; 29:3(b), 15; 30:11-14; Ecclesiastes 11:10; Isaiah 1:2; 3:12; 54:4; Jeremiah 3:24,25; 7:18; 17:2; 31:29; Ezekiel 16:44; 18:14-17,20; Micah 7:6; Zechariah 13:3; Matthew 10:21; 14:6-8; 15:3-6; Mark 7:9-13; 13:12; Luke 15:11-32; 1 Timothy 1:9).

Child Discipline

"It is...sometimes easier to head an institute for the study of child guidance than it is to turn one brat into a decent human being." (Joseph Wood Krutch)

When it comes to the subject of child discipline many people are divided over it. We would all agree that children, at one time or another, will need discipline. Given the fact, our sinful nature, which is corrupt even at birth, and the truth spoken in God's Word "foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child..." (Proverbs 22:15a) children will need to be disciplined.

There are those today that believe a "non-physical" psychological approach to child discipline has been scientifically proven to be the better method. This is a pure rebellion of God and His Word! God knows children better than we ever will. When we remove God's authority in all areas of life and practice and replace them with anemic pathetic modern systems, we run the risk of a juggernaut against God.

In many cases when parents do not physically discipline their children and refuse to heed God's instructions on this matter, God will leave them to their so-called modern methods which turn out to be a complete disaster. Some of the most arrogant, unruly, mouthy, selfish, mean, rude, prideful, rebellious brats have been products of the "modern methods." We have become a nation of arrogant people, so exalted in pride, so rebellious, that a whole generation is coming and will make the most unruly children look like wimps! Pray your children are not among them.

What is discipline for? God designed His kind of discipline to change the wrong behavior into right behavior. It's for correction if one is left to his own with no correction he will surely turn into an unholy terror. Children, like many adults, will take advantage of an opportunity to do wrong and hope to get away with it. What if God never disciplined you

for any of the sins you committed? You would be lost and going to hell. When you come in contact with undisciplined children it isn't their fault; it's the parents. It's their lack of understanding and laziness coupled with this twisted thinking that science holds a lot of the answers. God help us when we begin to believe that God does not really have all the answers to life's problems.

God instituted severe discipline for the purging of that evil and rebellious mentality.

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and [that], when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son [is] stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; [he is] a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear" (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

The principle of discipline is laid out here. If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother... this could mean a daughter also; however, it was common that daughters were under their fathers and were very obedient to them. The individual will not obey the voice of his father, or... mother they have told him and told him and [that] when they have chastened him. Now they have moved into physical discipline, and still, he will not hearken unto them. This is clearly out and out rebellion of the first kind, what more can be done?

Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son [is] stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; [he is] a glutton, and a drunkard.

God, in the Old Testament, had set up a system. One, the parents were to correct the children even physical discipline. Two, if this step failed they were to bring him to the gate (the place of judgment) and before the elders for a review which upon such if the accusations were true. Three, they would stone him and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he died. Severe punishment for such a one. Do you think the parents were said to see the execution of their son? Yes. We must remember it was after several attempts at reparation, and even the board of elders, that he was executed. It was not only for the son, but all the community so shalt thou put evil away from among you, and all Israel shall hear, and fear. This was not a cruel act, but retributive justice intended to be a deterrent for everyone, and into future generations.

We do not know the extent of benefit from this system of discipline during Israel's history, but we can say many would have thought twice about acts of rebellion. This system of discipline in that era was carried into the New Testament, in a less violent form, for the Church. (see Matthew 18:15-17.) Proverbs 20:20 speaks of this type of discipline. We read of the gross effects of weak discipline (Judges 17:1-4; 1 Samuel 2:22-25). We should have compassion and pity in the discipline of our children (Psalm 103:13; Hebrews 12:5-11).

God speaks of physical discipline for our children. It is the parents which do not physically discipline their children that are placing themselves above the knowledge of God and His care for us and have unruly, undisciplined, out of control children. This is a disgrace and weakness on their part. (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:15,17.) Let's look at these discipline passages.

Notice these are all in the book of proverbs—a book exhorting us to practical manners based on observation of life. Many would say "well, that was the Old Testament, were in the New." Genesis 1:1 says "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" would one use the same logic there as with discipline passages? Of course not case closed.

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

This passage speaks about any parent that spareth that is holding back, withholds, or refrains which many do today in an attempt to play this stupid psychological game, his rod what is that? A scepter, a staff, or a branch. This describes a rod (stick or branch from a tree) or the rod of a ruler, either way, it still describes discipline. If this is not done this man hateth his son.

In other words, if you do not correct your child, by physical discipline, you are saying you really don't care for them, you really don't care what they do or how they behave. You are showing a lack of concern and love over how they may turn out. Conversely, it says but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. Chasteneth means instruction, correction, chastise, discipline, or rebuke. Betimes means in good season, in good time, or at the right time. It's simple to understand God knows best follow His advice and you will witness great blessings.

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs 19:18).

To chasten means to instruct, discipline, or correct but it also means to punish! This word in Hebrew is different from the one in Proverbs 13:24 adding the definition "punish." Chasten thy son while there is hope that is before they become so out of control and rebellious that it would be too late. In this punishment, one is not to ...let not thy soul spare for his crying. In other words, don't feel bad when you are punishing them it's for their own good.

One of the worst things is when a parent punishes their child and right after, at the sight of their tears, runs and hugs them and kisses them and says something like "mommy, didn't mean it" what a mixed message! That kind of discipline is no good and only leads to your authority as weak and unstable. Yes, we are to have compassion in punishment and there is a right way to render it firmly, lovingly, and authoritatively.

"Foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child; [but] the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15).

Again, this speaks about physical correction for our children. In this case, the actions and thinking which require discipline are qualified by foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child. What will drive it far from him? The rod of correction. Again, we sense the reason for physical discipline—not to leave them in a state of foolishness or rebellion. It must be stated physical discipline must never be issued in anger; that does not discipline that's revenge. One disciplines a child to correct them; not to hurt them.

"Withhold not correction from the child: for [if] thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:13,14).

This passage reinforces the others and expands them to include real physical discipline. Withhold not correction from the child: for [if] thou beatest him with the rod... the word beatest does not mean what we generally apply to that word. It's to hit, strike, or smite not a tap and not a pounding! The degree is not mentioned only that physical spanking is to be used. If we do this what will happen? Two things he shall not die...and shalt deliver (recover, escape, rid rescue) his soul from hell. God is more concerned with an individual NOT ending up in hell, then a little discomfort for a short time.

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame"
(Proverbs 29:15).

Here again, the rod of correction is spoken of. Additionally, and reproof that is a rebuke or correction what does this do? Give wisdom. Conversely, a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame. The words left [to himself] mean free, or to let go this is when a child is allowed to do whatever he or she wants without any corrective intervention from their parents. This bringeth his mother to shame. How many times have you seen a child let loose or wild and you say why doesn't his mother do something?

"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Proverbs 29:17).

Once again, God reminds us to correct thy son when this is done then what? He shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. Bless the Lord, pray that this will be the case with many of us.

Financial Responsibilities

When we speak about financial responsibilities this would include the following: earning a living to support the work of God and our families, providing an inheritance for children, being faithful with money, not being in debt, and paying our taxes. In our day, as well as in the ancient world, money was used for a verity of things. Money is useful, but it must not consume us to the point it drives our motives.

Parents are to help the next generation to start their life financially (Numbers 27:1-11; 2 Corinthians 12:14).

Proverbs 31:10-31 speaks about the ideal woman (mother/wife) as keeping the house.

We must be faithful with money (Luke 16:1-13; 1 Timothy 5:8).

We must stay out of debt (1 Samuel 22:2; 2 Kings 4:7; Proverbs 22:7; Romans 13:8).

We must be responsible with it (1 Timothy 5:8).

We must pay our fair share of taxes (Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25; Romans 13:7)

Widows and Widowers

It's a fact that people die. The spouse that's left behind is called widows or widowers. As Christians, we must know, if our spouse was saved, that they have gone to be with the Lord and we must not lose hope. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him...wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:14,18). As those widows and widowers are left they may, if they are not young or well taken care of already, have needs. The Church needs to be open to help as Scripture dictates. At their loss, they will grieve (2 Samuel 11:26; Isaiah 54:4; Jeremiah 15:8,9).

Widows were not to be considered for wives by the Old Testament priests (Leviticus 21:14; Ezekiel 44:22).

Because of their vulnerability they were easy pray. We must help them not afflict them (Exodus 22:22,23; Deuteronomy 16:11; 24:17-21; 26:12,13; Ruth 1:10-18; Job 24:3,21; 31:16; Psalm 146:9; Isaiah 1:17; 10:1,2; Jeremiah 7:6; 49:11; Zachariah 7:10; Matthew 8:14,15; 23:14; Mark 12:38-44; Luke 4:26; 18:3-5; 20:46,47; 21:1-4; John 19:26,27; Acts 6:1-3; 1 Timothy 5:3-16; James 1:27).

Christian widows and widowers should serve God much (Luke 2:36,37; Romans 6:12; 1 Corinthians 7:8,9).

1 Timothy 5:3-16 gives a good working synopsis of how the Church is to treat and care for widows.

"Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But

she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn [to be] idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. For some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."

It says we are to honor widows that are widows indeed that is those that have truly suffered loss and not someone just saying they were to get a free ride from the Church. He goes on to say, but if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. This is if they have someone to care for them other than the Church they should. For in doing so that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. It's stated that a real desolate widow trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. Praise God! let's ask them to pray for us. Widows are to be blameless. But if any provide not for his own,

and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. This means that children, no matter how old, that are Christians if they refuse to care for their widow/ widower parents have this anathema applied to them. Next, the perquisites of entrance for help from the Church let not a widow be taken into the number under.threescore years old [60], having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

The seven qualifications are listed to ensure she has been a faithful believer and not a scam artist. What about the younger widows under 60? But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn [to be] idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. This kind of widow will burden the Church. Why and how do we know? For some are already turned aside after Satan.

What should the Christians and the Church do? If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."

Old Age

Everyone will grow old. This is a fact that can not be avoided, except one dies young or Jesus comes back, one should enjoy it and not worry about it. The elderly are cared for, looked upon, and respected differently in different cultures. In Hispanic cultures, for example, the elderly are cared for in the homes of their children often living with them. Even up to the point of death they may remain in their children's homes. Caucasian peoples often put them into nursing homes or convalescent homes. The American Indian elderly used to wander off to die not burdening their children. The Bible is clear that we must respect our aged parents.

They should be cared for when unable to do for themselves (1 Kings 1:1-4,15; Matthew 8:21; Mark 1:30,31; Luke 4:38,39; 9:59; John 19:26,27).

They should be respected and not deceived (Genesis 27:1-5; 28:8; 26:35; Job 32:2-4,6,7; Proverbs 23:22; Lamentations 4:16; 5:12).

The elderly women could bear a child (Genesis 17:17; 18:11-13; 21:7; Ruth 1:12; Luke 1:18,24,36,37; Hebrews 11:11).

They should be respected and their last wishes carried out (Genesis 47:28-31).

They should trust in God (Psalm 71:18; 148:12,13; Proverbs 16:31; Isaiah 46:4; Jeremiah 31:13; Luke 2:36,37; Romans 6:12; 1 Timothy 5:5).

They are blessed by many children and grandchildren (Proverbs 17:6).

God says their gray hair is beautiful (Proverbs 20:29).

We can learn wisdom, Godly principles, and the Scriptures from them (2 Timothy 1:5; Titus 2:2).

It's truly a sad state when a parent or grandparent is said to be a professing Christian and acts immature. This is a time in their lives that they should be an example, not a disappointment.