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"I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

Is There a Man in the House?

Lesson Subject: A godly husband is the spiritual leader of his home.

L58. Date: January 1988. **Text:** Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 11:18, 19; Joshua 24:15; Proverbs 4:1-4. **Topic:** Fatherhood; Family; Home.

Each person needs a leader, one to whom he is accountable. In the home, the husband/father is the leader. The man is to submit to God's leadership, and the family is to submit to the man's leadership under God.

The Bible clearly teaches that the husband is the head of the home. What if he does not want to be? God still holds him responsible. As Noah obeyed God *"to the saving of his house"* (Hebrews 11:7), so men can bless their families today by filling their God-assigned places in the homes.

If there is a single-parent home where there is no husband, the wife/mother must assume that leadership. She can depend on the help of God, who is *"the helper of the fatherless"* (Psalm 10:14). He is always available.

If there is a home with a stepfather, he is to assume the leadership the same as a natural father. Jesus held Joseph, His foster father, in high esteem, giving honor and obedience to him. That is a good example to follow today.

No home is perfect, for we are imperfect people. But we must seek to fill our roles and make our homes as much like God designed as possible. A godly man is the spiritual leader of his home. God has said that it should be so.

I. A MAN MUST COMMAND HIS HOUSE (Genesis 18:19)

God gave revelations to Abraham because He knew that Abraham would *"command his children and his household after him, and they (would) keep the way of the LORD"* (Genesis 18:19). He knows whether the man will be faithful and deals with him accordingly.

A. A man is under the command of God. He does not govern his family according to his own preferences. Like the great man Ezra, he must *"seek the law of the LORD, and . . . do it, and . . . teach . . . statutes and judgments"* (Ezra 7:10). When the Word of God is in a man's heart and he is submissive to it, it will be natural for him to teach his children (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). He must obey God and must account to God for his leadership of the family. What a solemn duty that is!

B. A man must guide his family in the way of God. One of the most pathetic accounts in the Bible is recorded in I Samuel 3. Eli, the high priest in Israel, heard this judgment from God: *"I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not"* (I Samuel 3:13). How tragic! A child left to himself (without proper parental guidance) always brings his parents to shame (Proverbs 29:15). Only a well-disciplined child grows into a self-disciplined adult.

C. A man must require obedience of his family under God. The Bible clearly commands, *"Children, obey your parents in all things"* (Colossians 3:20). If a child disobeys, God requires that *"the rod and reproof"* be applied (Proverbs 29:15). Only by sharing the things of God with the family can they be led to *"set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: and . . . not be as their fathers, a stubborn: and rebellious generation"* (Psalm 78:7, 8). The husband/father is the key to a spiritually obedient or a sinfully rebellious household.

It is not easy to be the head of the home, but it is essential. Each man will answer to God for his stewardship there. Be faithful, men!

II. A MAN MUST INSTRUCT HIS HOUSE (Deuteronomy 11:18-21; Proverbs 4:1-5)

A. A man can instruct by personal devotion. There is no substitute for a father who delights to do the will of God (Psalm 40:8). There is no substitute for a father who reads God's Word and prays in the presence of his family (Deuteronomy 11:18). There is no substitute for a father who lives by what God commands in the Bible. That man's personal devotion may influence the children more than his words can. Let the family see the devotion of the man of the house.

B. A man can instruct under all circumstances. Do not limit your conversation about God to the services of the church or to your daily family worship time. Talk of God *"when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"* (Deuteronomy 11:19). That principle is so important God gives it twice (compare Deuteronomy 6:7). That is what it means to bring up the children *"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4). Relate God to life every day of the week, not just on Sunday. Show the family that He is interested in every aspect of daily living. Keep an awareness of God in all your affairs.

C. A man can instruct, expecting God to bless. God has promised, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). Can a father claim that promise concerning his children and expect God to fulfill it? Yes! God makes no promise which He does not keep. *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise"* (II Peter 3:9). Begin by dedicating your child to God; then rear that child for God. Ask God's help all the years the child is being trained. Teach him the way of God as best you know. Then leave the results to God who has given His promise. He will be faithful to His Word.

D. A man can instruct after the example of his fathers. The psalmist shows how religious instruction is to pass from generation to generation. *"He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: . . . even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children"* (Psalm 78:5, 6). Someone brought knowledge of God to us. We are responsible to see that the next generation receives that revealed truth. Our greatest privilege as parents is to instill the knowledge of God in our children.

E. A man can impress the necessity of obedience. It is never enough to know religious truth. There must be the response of glad obedience to the truth known. *"Forsake ye not my law. . . . Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live"* (Proverbs 4:2, 4). When one sees how much is at stake, he must require obedience from his family. Otherwise, judgment will fall on him and them for their neglect. Beware and be alert!

III. A MAN MUST BE AN EXAMPLE TO HIS HOUSE (Joshua 24:15)

A. A man's example must be based on his spiritual heritage. What has been his personal experience with God? No one can lead his family where he has not been. Know the Lord personally. That is why a parent should take — not just send — his children to Sunday School and worship

services. Otherwise the adage may become true, "Your actions speak so loudly I cannot hear what you say."

B. A man's example must be clear and definite. It must involve reverence before God, love for God, repentance for wrongs against God, and glad service to God. That is one's whole duty as Deuteronomy 10:12 gives it: "*What doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.*"

C. A man's example must not depend on the response of others. Joshua said, "*If it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*" (Joshua 24:15). No matter what other parents do, the Christian father must instruct his family in the things of God. The fact that "everybody's doing it" is no reason for the Christian to join. It might rather be a reason for him to refrain. Do right because it is right, whether anyone else does right or not.

D. A man's example involves total commitment. He must have a heart which thirsts after God (Psalm 63:1). He must guard his mind, emotions, and will, lest his heart departs from the Lord God (Deuteronomy 4:9). He must be able to say in truth, "*Thou art my God*" (Psalm 118:28). He must be a man of God if he wants his family to have a Christian home.

A Christian home will produce children who will "*hear, and learn to fear the LORD*" (Deuteronomy 31:13). Blessed is the home whose father says, "*Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD*" (Psalm 34:11). May God give us Christian men who will build Christian homes.

QUESTIONS

1. Whom does God set as head of the home?
2. What if there is no husband/father in the home?
3. What if there is a stepfather in the home?
4. How did Eli succeed as a priest and fail as a father?
5. How can a man instruct his household in the things of God?
6. How does Proverbs 22:6 relate to this study?
7. In what practical ways can a man be a good example?
8. Why is a good example essential in training children?
9. What principle of a Christian home do you find in Joshua 24:15?
10. How can you make your home more of a Christian home?