



THE TEACHING *Legacy of* *Derek Prince*

PATTERN RELATIONSHIPS IN THE HOME

To *have* authority one must be *under* authority. It is this principle which governs relationships within the home. When the husband is under the authority of Christ, he has the authority of Christ. When the wife is under the authority of her husband, she has the authority of her husband in the home. But if the chain of authority is broken at any point, then authority breaks down in the home. Here is the major problem of many homes today—in America and in other lands. There is a breakdown of authority because one of the links in the chain is out of place. Either the husband is not subject to Christ, or the wife is not subject to the husband. Often both are out of their place. The result: disorder, disharmony and rebellion.

There has been a great deal of teaching about the submission of the woman in the home. Many Christian women resent this teaching because they feel it implies that they are “inferior.” But this results from a basic misunderstanding of the husband/wife relationship.

RELATIONSHIP OF JESUS TO HIS FATHER

Jesus said three things about His relationship with the Father, all of which apply equally to the relationship of the wife to the husband.

First, He said, “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30). There was complete unity between Jesus and His Father. Being one with the Father, Jesus was also equal with the Father. Philippians 2:6 tells us that He had a divine right to be “equal with God.” He was God.

In the same manner, the husband and the wife are one. The Bible tells us that they are “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5–6). One part of one’s flesh cannot

be “inferior” to another part; all of one’s flesh is equal. The place of submission of the wife to the husband in no way implies inferiority, for the Scripture clearly indicates that God considers the husband and wife as equals in the body of Christ (Galatians 3:28).

The second thing that Jesus said about His relationship to the Father was that God requires “that all men should honor the Son just as they honor the Father” (John 5:23). The Father Himself has honored the Son by placing the entire creation under His feet (Ephesians 1:22). The Father delights to honor the Son (Philippians 2:9–11). He desires to lift Him up and have all things placed under Him. There is never a word

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about the Father “putting down” His Son, or trying to take more honor than His Son. It is the Father’s desire to honor, promote and establish Jesus over all creation.

The attitude of the husband to his wife should reflect that of the Father to Jesus. The husband should delight to honor and lift up his wife. He should do everything in his power to make her feel respected, honored, praised and esteemed. God the Father will not tolerate any slight of indignity offered to Jesus—much less give one! The attitude of the husband toward his wife should be precisely the same. The wife should not need to seek her own honor or establish her own position. The husband should do this for her. In this way all stigma of inferiority is removed.

What would happen if we men consistently treated our wives in this way? In most cases they would gladly and willingly acknowledge our headship. They would no longer desire to fight for recognition or independence.

In Hebrews 1:3 the writer tells us that Jesus is *“the brightness of His [Father’s] glory.”* In 1 Corinthians 11:7 Paul tells us that the *“woman [wife] is the glory of man.”* Here again, there is a parallel between the relationship of God the Father to Jesus and the relationship of the husband to his wife. The Father reveals His glory in the Person of Jesus. The husband reveals his glory in the person of his wife.

If a wife is restful, secure, and contented, it brings glory to her husband. It shows that her husband is treating her as he should. But if the wife is bitter, resentful, and insecure, it brings dishonor to her husband. It shows that he is failing in his responsibilities toward her. A well-known preacher was once asked if a certain man was a good Christian. His answer: “I don’t know; I haven’t met his wife yet. I’ll tell you after I’ve seen her!”

This brings us to a third facet of the Father/Jesus relationship. Jesus said, *“My Father is greater than I”* (John 14:28). Here is an apparent paradox: Jesus is equal

with the Father, yet He says that the Father is greater. It is said of Jesus that He *“did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped”* (Philippians 2:6 NASB). He did not fight for recognition or authority, but willingly submitted Himself to His Father and allowed His Father to fill His rightful place of headship. By remaining in submission to His Father, Jesus maintained the unity within the Godhead. If He had left His voluntary place of submission, the unity of the Godhead would have been broken.

Likewise, even though the wife is one with the husband—and therefore also equal with him—God calls on her to submit herself to her husband for the sake of the unity and order in the home. If she refuses,

there will be a breakdown of unity in the home, and disorder will result. Thousands of happy Christian wives will testify that the place of protection and covering, under the authority of their husbands, is indeed a God-designed place of security and peace.

However, this places a tremendous responsibility upon the wife. It means that no man can truly be head of his home unless his wife yields to his authority. No head can function without a neck to hold it up; and no man can truly be the head of his home without the voluntary submission and support of his wife.

What happens if one of the partners fails to fill his God-ordained place in the home? Does that release the other partner from responsibility? No! The ultimate responsibility of each partner is to God, not to the other partner. Each has a place of obedience to take before God, and the conduct of the other partner does not change this.

I once heard this principle vividly illustrated in a traffic court. The judge was questioning a man who was charged with exceeding the speed limit. “Were you traveling in excess of the speed limit?”

“There were other cars traveling faster than I was,” the man replied.

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"You are not responsible for the other cars!" the judge snapped back. "You are only responsible for the car that you were driving. Were you exceeding the speed limit?" Reluctantly, the man admitted that he was!

So it is between the husband and wife. One day *"we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 5:10). In that day, the husband will not be required to answer for his wife's conduct, nor the wife for her husband's conduct. Each partner will answer directly to the Lord for the role that he or she has played in the home.

THE ROLES OF THE FATHER

In my last letter, I pointed out that the father is the primary "homemaker." Unless the father takes his place, accepts his responsibilities, and stands as God intends him to stand as the head of his household, God's program for the home cannot work. If the father will not provide proper headship in the home, the home will fall into disorder.

In His relationship to the church, Christ holds three great offices that have been delegated to Him by God the Father. He is Priest, Prophet and King (or Governor). In every home the father stands in a parallel relationship to his family. There are three main offices delegated by divine authority to the father, from which he may never abdicate in the sight of God. Every father in every dispensation is called by God to be the priest, the prophet and the king of his home.

- **As a priest, he represents his family to God.**
- **As a prophet, he does the opposite; he represents God to his family.**
- **As a king, he governs his family on behalf of God.**

As a priest, the father is called upon to intercede for his family, bringing their needs in prayer before God, and claiming God's protection and blessing upon them. This he cannot do without faith. Not the least of a father's responsibilities is that of exercising faith on

behalf of his family.

In the Old Testament this is typified by the ordinance of the Passover. In each family it was the duty of the father to kill the sacrificial lamb and to sprinkle its blood on the lintel and two doorposts of his home (Exodus 12:3–7). By this act of faith and obedience, he obtained the protection of God for his whole family.

In the New Testament the same principle is dramatically illustrated in Mark 9:20–27, where the father of a demon-afflicted son comes to Jesus. Imploring help for the child, he says to Jesus, *"If You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."* Jesus immediately returns the responsibility for the child upon the father and says, *"If you can believe, to him who believes all things are possible."* The child's deliverance hinged on the father's faith. A father has both the right and the responsibility to believe for his children.

People quite frequently bring little children to me for deliverance, but I have learned to ask them, "Are you the child's parent?" Sometimes it is merely an aunt or a well-wishing neighbor. All too often the parents—and particularly the father—are nowhere to be found. I find no basis in Scripture for ministering to a child except on the basis of the faith of one or both parents.

The one person who hardly ever comes to me seeking help for a child is the father. Our whole scheme of operation is out of order, and we wonder why God is not blessing it. In ministering to a child, no preacher can take the place of a father.

The second office given to every father by God is that of a prophet—he is to represent God to his family. A father does this whether he realizes it or not—whether it is a good representation or not. Most people involved in counseling or working with children will bear witness to the fact that all children form their basic impression of God from one source—their fathers. Is it any wonder so many of our youth want little or nothing to do with God?

The third office of a father in his home is that of a king. As a king, the father is required to govern his family on behalf of God. In describing the qualifications

of a leader in the church Paul specified that he must be *“one who rules his own house well”* (1 Timothy 3:4). The word rule indicates the exercise of governmental authority. There is a direct relationship between leadership in the home and leadership in the church. The home is the proving ground for the life and ministry of every man.

Let us face up to one simple, objective fact: If our religion does not work at home, it does not work—period! In heaven’s name, let us not export to the world something that does not work at home! The world already has enough of strife and disharmony. It needs no more!

The tragic disaster of the American home is the renegade male. Some men may feel that the word renegade is too strong—almost insulting. However, I use it advisedly. A renegade is one who reneges, and the vast majority of American males have reneged on their three primary responsibilities—as husbands, fathers and spiritual leaders. It has left us with a matriarchal society dominated by women.

Let me ask you: Who, if anybody, normally prays with the children at bedtime? Who gets them ready for Sunday school? Who reads them Bible stories? Who prays when a child is sick? In the majority of cases, it

is the mother. The mother should indeed share in the spiritual growth of the child, but it is the father who is called upon by God to be the initiator and leader in the spiritual life of the family.

When a child goes astray, we want to blame the church . . . the society . . . the schools—everyone except the person who chiefly deserves the blame—and that is the father. Most boys think that the church and the things of God are “sissy” because they see only their mothers involved in them. Little Johnny grows up saying to himself, “I want to be like Daddy.” In being “like Daddy,” he determines to leave the things of God to the “weaker vessel” (1 Peter 3:7).

In due course, when little Johnny fails at life—when he becomes a drop-out or a delinquent—it is not really Johnny who has failed, but his father. I have come to see that there are no juvenile delinquents, only adult delinquents. It is not children who are the real drop-outs, but their parents—and primarily their fathers.

My friend, let me ask you: How do you rate as a husband and a father? You may achieve success in your business or attain popularity at the country club—you may become president of a bank, or achieve a golf score that startles your friends—but if you fail as a husband and a father, then in God’s eyes you are a failure. ■

ADAPTED FROM A NEW WINE ARTICLE ENTITLED “FATHERHOOD, PART 2.”

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