

Sermon for Sunday, September 2, 1979, by Andrew A. Jumper, D.D., Pastor  
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"GOD'S GLUE FOR FRACTURED FAMILIES - VII"

I Timothy 3:1-13

Text: He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way;" I Timothy 3:4

Our series on the Christian family has focused on the three basic elements that undergird the family. First we focused on rule--God's structure for the family. Every organization must have some structure--without structure we have anarchy and chaos--God has given us a structure for the family. Secondly, we look at relationship--how we relate in the family--what are the kinds of attitudes and the spirit that we carry into our relationship to one another in the family. Then we began last Sunday to look at the third element--roles, the part that each member plays in the family.

Last week we began discussing the various roles that God has established for members of a Christian family. We began by discussing the role that the husband and father has. The scripture makes it abundantly clear that the man is the head of the home in the same sense that Jesus is the head of the church. What does that mean in terms of the man's role in the home? That was the subject we began to discuss last week. We saw first, that man's role in the home was to be the servant-leader and we talked about the meaning of that. We talked about what it meant in terms of style, for a man is to rule his home in the same style that Jesus rules the church--a style that comes to minister and not be ministered unto. At the same time, we saw that this leadership style of the servant is to be one where each member of the family, each member of the body, has opportunity to express the gifts that God has given him or her--where each person has the privilege of exercising the talents and unique qualities that God has bestowed upon him. Then, we saw how in the second place that man is not only to be the servant-leader, he is also to be the spiritual leader of the home. Oh, how homes today need men who assume their God-given tasks of being spiritual leaders! So many young people today are turning to drugs, turning to sex, turning to cults, turning to bad things, in a search for something to give meaning to life. How desperately they need fathers who are teaching them the things of God, who are setting them a godly example, who are leading them in the ways of the Lord! We need the church today--we need godly mothers today--but most of all we need godly fathers for God has made them the spiritual leaders of the home. If husbands and fathers fail there, then the whole home begins to crack and fall apart. God's glue for fractured families is for men to be spiritual leaders.

So, the man's first role in the family is to be the servant-leader; his second role is to be the spiritual leader. His third role is to be the manager or overseer of the children in the home.

In I Timothy 3:4 and 5 we read, "he must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own house, how can he care for God's church?" It is obvious here that the word "manage" means to control or discipline. Over in Titus, chapter 1, verse 6, Paul elaborates on this when he says that a man should have children who are "not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate." (Titus 1:6) So, the emphasis on managing one's household has to do with discipline; it has to do with giving order and structure to the lives of one's children.

Now, making your children submissive in the sense of repressing them is not what St. Paul means here. Children need--and want--structure and discipline in their lives. They need to know what the limits are and that there are some rules they must follow and obey. But the Bible does not mean the sort of discipline that is heavy-handed, which represses a child, which breaks his spirit. The Bible expressly forbids that, for fathers are not to provoke their children to wrath or to discourage them.

Let me illustrate something of what is meant. Do you remember the Beattitudes of Jesus? In one of them he says, "Blessed are the meek..." Now, that word "meek" is interesting. It is the Greek word used to describe a horse that has been broken to saddle or to harness. It doesn't mean the horse has lost its power or force or even its personality. It means rather that all of the power and ability of that horse is now under control. Now it can be used effectively! Now it is harnessed and the power is channeled in such a way that it can be used. I believe that is the basic meaning of St. Paul when he says that he is to keep his children submissive and respectful. You can put so much restraint on a child that you either break his spirit or cause him to rebel. Or, you can have so little control that a child becomes unrestrained and undisciplined. Both are wrong. The Bible means energy under control, power under harness. That is a delicate and difficult balance to maintain, but that is the job of the father. He is to manage his household in such a way that the gifts and abilities and powers of the family are harnessed--under control--so that they can be useful.

The fourth role of the husband is to be the provider. The Bible says, "If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (I Timothy 5:8) So a fourth role for the head of the home is to provide for the needs of the family. Obviously this means to provide for the physical necessities of a family. But I think it is also much broader than that. It means to provide for one's family in every way. A lot of parents today provide for their children materially, but they do not provide for them emotionally or spiritually. Today I see many parents who indulge their children in material things, but it is often a substitute for providing the things that the children really need, such as discipline, love, concern and emotional support. Frequently, parents are guilty of giving children things as a substitute for giving themselves--for giving them time and attention. As I look back on my own fatherhood, this is one of the deepest regrets I have. Too often I provided for the reasonable physical needs, the material needs of my children, but at the same time I was so busy doing "church work" that I did not give them myself--my time, my attention, my love. If I could go back and change things in my own life, that is something I would change. I would be home more, I would do more things with the children. I would tell them more stories and play more games with them. I would give them more of myself. So, to you young parents who have small children remember the Bible says to provide for your own family--and that provision is more than physical or material needs. Soon those children will be young adults and then it will be too late. You can never turn the clock back and undo what you have or have not done. Also, I would remind you that it mentions providing for relatives. Do you do that? Is there some lonely grandmother some parent who is no longer able to be up and about, some old aunt or uncle who has no one and is lonely? The Bible says we are to provide for our own relatives--not only their material needs, but other needs they have which might be far deeper and far more profound.

A fifth role of the husband and father is to be hospitable. To be honest, until I began this study, that fact had never come home to me in quite the way I see it now. Back in the days when Paul wrote, Christianity was really a traveling religion as Christians went from place to place, either on church business or even on private affairs. Hotels and motels as we know them today were simply not available. As Christian people traveled into strange communities, they sought out fellow-believers and there they received a warm and cordial welcome. Christians care for one another.

Well, we do not need exactly the same kind of hospitality today, but we need the same spirit of hospitality where the home of the Christian is open to others. Do we care about one another? Do we care that others have deep needs and desperate hurts? Oh, how important it is for Christians to live out their love for others

by a spirit of hospitality, of concern for others. Children learn so much about the Christian love of their parents by the spirit of hospitality they see in their parents. Last Christmas when families brought blankets--or when families took on the job of providing Christmas for needy families in the inner city--or when families join together to provide food and loving support to someone when there has been a death--these are all ways of showing hospitality. Children learn from that. The attitude of a home becomes clearly evident in the kind of hospitality it has for others. So, the father is to take the lead in hospitality.

The sixth role of the husband is to be a faithful partner to his wife, which includes their sexual relationship. Now it's much broader than that--to be faithful to your wife, to support her. For example, when you are in public with your wife, do you attempt to correct her or modify her behavior by embarrassing her in front of others? That's not being faithful. Being faithful means to support her emotionally and in every other way. Are you supporting your wife faithfully? Once the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked him about a man divorcing his wife. Jesus made it clear that a man's relationship to his wife is second only to his relationship to God. I don't know if you realize that or not and you wives, who get focused in on your children first, that is out of the perfect will of God. The Bible says that a man and woman should consider relationship to each other second only to God. He said that a man should leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. In the sexual relationship to one another they become one flesh. (Matthew 19:5-6) They become, as Genesis puts it concerning Adam and Eve, "flesh of flesh and bone of bone." There is a mystical union here between a man and a woman through this, the deepest of all human relationships that two people can have.

In I Corinthians, chapter 7, beginning at verse 3, we read that a husband should give his wife her conjugal rights. That means first of all that a man should try to meet the sexual needs of his wife. Sex is a gift of God. It is one of the most profound and meaningful experiences that a man and a woman can share together. It is so sad that sex has been taken and degraded in movies and magazines. When it is deprived of its spiritual connotations, sex becomes something less than the creator meant for it to be. It becomes degrading and dehumanizing. When you see your televisions and your movie screens filled with lust and passion you are seeing what sin does to a gift of God. The Bible says that a man--or a woman, for that matter-- should give to his or her mate the conjugal rights that belong to that person. That word "rights" means fidelity. It means fidelity not only in the marriage but before the marriage. The young person who enters into a sexual union before marriage is stealing from his or her future mate. Something is being taken that belongs to another and given to someone else.

According to the statistics, there is a lot of adultery today as well as premarital sex. God expressly forbids that. Sex is not bad. It is a glorious and wonderful gift from God. But it is also meant to be experienced within the context of marriage and the person who uses it any other way is taking a gift of God and degrading and abusing and contaminating it. The person who indulges in sexual activity before marriage or outside of marriage brings something less than his or her whole self to the marriage partner. How can you give to another what is rightfully his or hers if part of it has been given away to someone else? Yes, the husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights and she should to him.

For those of you who have committed this sin, let me reassure you that there is forgiveness with God. Yet, in spite of forgiveness, something of yourself is forever gone and you know that. For you young people who have not yet made that mistake, let me urge you to avoid that pitfall, to stay away from temptation. You have nothing to gain and everything to lose.

So, the role of the husband and father of a home is to be the servant-leader, the spiritual leader, to be the manager of the family in the sense of control, to be the provider for the whole family materially and emotionally, to be hospitable in a concern for those outside the family, and to be a faithful partner to his wife--a faithfulness that includes his whole being where she is second in his life only to God.

As the Bible puts it, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."

The Bible says that a man should love his wife as his own body, as if he were one body with her. This is a picture of the love that Christ has for the church. The church is his body, of which he is the head. He saves and cleanses the church by the word of water, that he might present it to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or anything of the kind. This is the love that husbands are to have for their wives. It is a love that is self-sacrificing, that is willing to give up one's own life for the other. It is a love that is spiritual, that is concerned with the soul of the other. It is a love that is faithful, that is loyal and true. It is a love that is patient, that is long-suffering and kind. It is a love that is gentle, that is calm and peaceful. It is a love that is pure, that is free from all impurities. It is a love that is holy, that is set apart and consecrated to God. It is a love that is unselfish, that is not concerned with one's own interests but with the interests of the other. It is a love that is enduring, that is lasting and permanent. It is a love that is unconditional, that is not based on any conditions or requirements. It is a love that is unconditional, that is not based on any conditions or requirements. It is a love that is unconditional, that is not based on any conditions or requirements.

In I Corinthians, chapter 5, Paul writes that we should love one another as we love ourselves. This is the love that Christ has for us. He died for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. This is the love that husbands are to have for their wives. It is a love that is self-sacrificing, that is willing to give up one's own life for the other. It is a love that is spiritual, that is concerned with the soul of the other. It is a love that is faithful, that is loyal and true. It is a love that is patient, that is long-suffering and kind. It is a love that is gentle, that is calm and peaceful. It is a love that is pure, that is free from all impurities. It is a love that is holy, that is set apart and consecrated to God. It is a love that is unselfish, that is not concerned with one's own interests but with the interests of the other. It is a love that is enduring, that is lasting and permanent. It is a love that is unconditional, that is not based on any conditions or requirements. It is a love that is unconditional, that is not based on any conditions or requirements. It is a love that is unconditional, that is not based on any conditions or requirements.

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