

(The Sufficiency of the Saviour) 3. for Home Life

by Stephen Olford

The Christian home is a relational structure under the Lordship of Christ, and its beauty and duty are rooted in the sufficiency of Christ.

Duration: 1:00:10

Scripture: Colossians 3:18

Topics: "Sufficiency Of The Saviour", "Christian Home", "Family Roles"

Description

Stephen Olford emphasizes the significance of the Christian home, urging that it should be a place of peace, enlightenment, and enablement under the Lordship of Christ. He discusses the roles and duties of wives, husbands, and children, highlighting the importance of love, respect, and obedience within the family structure. Olford warns against the dangers of broken homes and stresses that a strong Christian family is foundational to society. He encourages parents to nurture their children with love and discipline, while also calling for a commitment to rebuild the altar of worship in homes. Ultimately, he reminds the congregation that the sufficiency of the Savior is essential for a thriving home life.

Transcript

Will you turn to Colossians chapter three? And tonight, just two simple verses, but oh what a punch they pack. And we will be borrowing very heavily from the parallel passage in Ephesians, which is much longer. In fact, at one point, I'll ask you to turn to that passage.

But for those of you who've joined us, and we're thankful for your presence, and we believe this place will be full by Thursday, we are dealing with some very, very important issues in the Christian life. And tomorrow, the work ethic is possibly one of the most important messages I want to deliver. But tonight, the home life.

And notice where it starts. Wives, be subject to your husbands as it is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. As one said in that beautiful music period of worship, possibly one of the hardest places on earth to witness is your home. Some of you may come from hostile homes, non-Christian homes, where it's awfully difficult even to say

the name of Jesus.

But even in Christian homes, it's difficult to witness. Because I'll tell you something, you can fool people in the church, and you can fool people in the world, but you cannot fool people in your home. Your children can read you loud and clear, and nobody understands you better than your wife, or your husband, as the case may be.

To fail in the home is to fail miserably. And yet the home, as we heard in the opening prayer, is the unit of the family, the unit of the nation, the very bulwark of society. And, if I may say so, predates the church, and comes from our Father God.

It follows, therefore, that a broken home is a threat to the very established order of things. Now, I don't know what your people are saying in this country, but some sociologists predict the death of the family. They say that Hans Fernand Lomborg, author of *The Coming New Transformation*, argues, and I quote, the family is near the point of extinction.

Professor Margaret Mead, now dead, noted, however, that whatever other people say, the family, he, she says, is in fact the only institution we have that does not have a hope of disappearing. And I agree with Margaret Mead, not with her theology, don't mistake me on that point, but certainly with her conviction about the family, because God has ordained the family. And yet, I have to add very, very quickly that never in history, that is, modern history, has the family been in such trouble.

I have right here your Sunday mail. And your wonderful state here, that has given us such a glorious welcome, is going to celebrate the family year, as against all other states in Australia. And one of the reasons is this, your statistics show, and I quote here, while 1903-9 marriages took place, last year there were 8,056 divorces, almost 50 percent, almost 50 percent.

We'll come back to that in just a moment. And there's great concern in this state of Queensland concerning the family. And I believe the Christian church should lead the way in showing that this wonderful institution of the home, this institution upon which God smiled from the very beginning, should have its exemplification in the lives of men and women like you and me.

And I say a word to singles here, this message is not just for married couples, it's for you as well, because you're part of that family. It's for some of you young people here who are contemplating love, courtship, and marriage in days to come. So I'm going to ask you to follow me very closely as we deal with three tremendous aspects of this wonderful subject.

But I'm going to take it in two main divisions. First of all, the beauties of the Christian home. The beauties of the Christian home.

Notice the words I emphasize. Wives, husbands, children, fathers. The home is not a material building.

The home is a relational structure. And the Christian home is that relational structure under the Lordship of Christ, and available to all the sufficiency of Christ. The apostle compares the church to the home, and the home to the church.

And as we'll be showing a little later, there is a tremendous lot that Paul says in his companion epistle, Ephesians chapter 5, on this very subject. And there are three beautiful things in particular that characterize this relational structure, this home, which is not just the outward bricks, but the home of

husband and wife, and parents and children. Three things, jot them down.

Number one, the beauty of a Christian environment. The beauty of a Christian environment. Notice what Paul says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

I know we're borrowing from last night, but it's part of the context. What Paul says about the unity of the church also applies to the unity of the home. And someone has remarked that there are two kinds of magic.

There's the magic of heaven, there's the magic of hell. How true this is of hope. A home can be a heaven or a hell.

If it's a heaven, it is a sanctuary from the noisy world outside. It's a harbor from the storms of life. It's an elusive person, perfume which penetrates to its remotest corners.

If it's a hell, as some of you perhaps know, then it's a memory of horrid fights and strife and a place of utter wretchedness. Only the peace of Christ can create an environment that beautifies the home. That's why the Lord Jesus must be acknowledged as Lord in the home.

Husband, I challenge you as I'll be challenging you later. Is Jesus Christ Lord of your life? And is your wife subject to that headship under his lordship? And are the children subject to that loving authority? And is the King of Peace swaying the scepter of power and authority in your home? Is your home a place of peace? And by the way, peace in scripture has nothing to do with the cemetery piece. Peace is action without friction.

A beautiful environment, the beauty of a Christian environment. Oh, how I thank God for memories of my boyhood days in Africa in that respect, more of that in just a moment, and our own blessed home. Just two sons, Jonathan and David, we'll come to them in a moment, and a sweetheart wife, and all the joy of home life as we've known it throughout the years.

But look again, the beauty of a Christian enlightenment. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom. All the books ever written on love, courtship, and marriage, and the family, won't match this book of books.

And it breaks my heart, and I've read almost every book there is on marriage, and every book there is on so-called love and courtship. And I want to tell you something, what bothers me is that it's so much of it is non-Biblical, borrowed from the psychology and philosophy of a world that's gone to pots, instead of the eternal word of God. There is no doctrine or duty regarding the home to which the Bible does not speak with authority and relevance.

The problem is that this holy book is not revered or read in our homes today. John Bunyan said, this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book. This very night, I'm going to open the altar again, and we're going to sing, Have Thine Own Way, Lord.

I hope couples are going to come and kneel here, and especially husbands, and say, Lord, I want to confess that the altar of devotions, and the reading of your word, and the lifting up of my family in prayer, that altar has broken down in our home. And I can't remember last when we gathered to read the word, and to pray, and to wait on you. And Lord, I want to confess that sin, and I want to rebuild the altar of worship once again in our home.

I was telling friends just the other day that some of the greatest moments of my life go back to that little chota, a little round room off our dining room, where every morning my father marched us off. Sometimes even with rebellious sons, there were three of us, Stephen, Paul, and John. And my mother sat down in a little organ, a little organ given her by Sister Abigail, and she played a hymn, and we sang a hymn.

If it had five verses, we sang every verse. And then my father opened the word of God, and expounded it, and we got to our knees and had a round of prayer. And when visiting brethren came through, as often they did, they were part of that, and they were given the assignment to read the scriptures, and expound the scriptures for the rest of the week.

I remember a man called Charles Swan, who opened the book of Daniel during those days, and I've never forgotten his teaching on Daniel. It was in our devotional prayer time as a family. The place of enlightenment, that's where you can share your secrets.

Heather and I will never, never, never want to rob our memories, this side of eternity. In eternity, of course, all will be clear. A little place we had up in the Poconos of Pennsylvania, where during the vacation time especially, we gathered as a family.

We played golf together, we laughed together, we went on trails together. But the great time was every night when we opened the scriptures and began to read, and discussions would begin, and our sons would ask us about sex, they would ask us about the fullness of the Spirit, they would ask us about demonism, they would ask us about the problems and the mysteries of nature, and we'd go on talking, and we would go to our beds to sleep, and they would sit on the edge of the bed and talk us through to two o'clock, three o'clock in the morning. Those were the greatest days of our life.

The home, the place of enlightenment. But it's more than that, it's more than that, it is the beauty of a Christian enablement. Because it's into this very context, in the Ephesian epistle, that Paul says, be not drunk with wine where it is in excess, but be filled with the Spirit, that he goes right into wives and husbands, parents and children.

And as we've noted already, homes are breaking up all across our land today, here and in America and elsewhere. People have discovered that cocktails, drinking parties, artificial stimulants, never keep a home together, never keep a home together. It absolutely shatters me when I look into the face of young people who are already alcoholics, and they tell me they learn to drink in their home.

That's why Paul says, don't be drunk with wine where it is in excess, but be filled with the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit fills the life, I'll tell you something, you get the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, and joy, and peace, and long-suffering, and gentleness, and goodness, and faith, and self-control. You say, what has that to do with a home? Let me give you, let me give you my own outline.

Listen, joy is the secret of a happy home. Peace is the secret of a harmonious home. Long-suffering is the secret of a helpful home.

Gentleness is the secret of a heavenly home. Goodness is the secret of a hospitable home. Faith is the secret of an honorable home.

Meekness is the secret of a humble home. Self-control, temperance is the secret of a healthy home. Only the Holy Spirit can enable husband and wife, parents and children, to live in love day after day, day after day, with all the irregularities and consistencies that are part of our own nature, and yet live in love.

Live in love. Why? Because this agape love, let loose by the Holy Spirit, His mind in me thinking, and eyes in me seeing, His lips in me speaking, in my heart loving, only the Holy Spirit, living out His life in us, can make it that kind of home. And I want to tell you, if I didn't have a home to come back to, to regroup for enablement, I would never be able to cope in the ministry.

And I say to pastors here, how anybody can stand up and begin to minister on a Sunday morning, knowing very well, you have chaos back at home, is something that boggles my mind. As a matter of fact, in terms of actual qualification, the scripture says, if a man know not how to control, how to rule his own home, how to bring his own home under control, he is disqualified from being an elder, and for that matter, a preacher, or a pastor. The beauties of the Christian home.

Is your home like that? Is your home like that? Those three wonderful things, Christian environment, Christian enlightenment, Christian enablement, that's the home. Be glorified, Lord Jesus, in our home. Now we come down to the grassroots of our subject, the duties of the Christian home.

Ah, the beauties are there, but also the duties. Will you notice verses 18 through 21? We won't read them again because we're dealing with them as we go along. These instructions may be unpopular today, but they constitute the word of God to all cultures, in all countries, and for all centuries.

We can never enjoy the beauties of the Christian home until we enact the duties of the Christian home. Ha! Through the supremacy and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus. And Paul starts right away.

Number one, there are the duties of wives in the home. Now, you wives, you listen to me very carefully. The duties of wives in the home.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Now, while it's obvious that the duties of a wife are gathered up in one word, used in our King James Version, submission, we can't leave it there. Other related passage must be examined in order for us to understand and implement what Paul has in mind.

Writing to the Ephesians, he says, Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. The wife must see that she reverence her husband.

Three very, very significant and yet beautiful statements. Let's look at them. Let's look at them.

The submission which is taught here is wholly different to the slavish submission that existed in Paul's day, or that is sometimes preached even from our pulpits throughout this land. This submission is born of a wedded love and dictated by deep, deep affection. In no way does this submission suggest intellectual, social, or personal inferiority.

To the contrary, it could be the very opposite. It could be the very opposite. When God created Adam, He made him a perfect man.

When God created the woman, He did not take the woman out of the head of the man to be ruled, or out of the feet to be trampled under, but out of the side, the place of equality and affection. And we must always remember that in terms of our personhood and our creatureliness. But having said that, very simply God is saying to wives what He said to Eve at the very first marriage ceremony, be a helpmeet, or be a person who is the complement of your mate.

For that is fitting in the Lord, as Paul adds. Paul amplifies it by telling wives what a helpmeet is. And I want you to note the three things.

Three things. Number one, a helpmeet supports her husband with a loyalty of love. A loyalty of love.

Submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. There is no room left here, ladies, no room left here for unfaithfulness or even suspicion. You are to be loyal to your husband as the only man in the world.

In fact, Peter adds this quality of loyalty when he writes and says, even with you have an unconverted husband. An unconverted husband. And I wish you'd read that passage in 1 Peter 3. All those first six verses, and then the one concerning the husband, the seventh verse, read those verses very, very carefully.

Because what Peter is saying, if you live, if you live, as you are hearing in the music tonight, with the indwelling spirit, making your life precious and wonderful, which is in the sight of God of great price, you're going to win that unconverted husband without preaching at him, without nagging him, without irritating him. With so many divorces taking place in the Christian world today, and I mean the Christian world today, I think we need to get back to this concept, biblical concept, of loyalty. The loyalty of love.

The loyalty of love. Then the help needed is to support a husband with the ministry of love. The ministry of love.

Let the wives be subject to their husbands in everything. Will you underline that? In everything. I didn't say that.

The Holy Spirit said that. Paul didn't say that. Nor is it culturally limited.

God said that. Into that phrase, in everything, we can include, of course, all that the Bible says about women's ministry in the home, in the church, and in the world. You all heard me talk about that at the women's rally the other day.

It certainly embraces such ministries as childbearing, homemaking, social entertaining, church attending, personal witnessing, prophesying, yes, and ministering the Word, yes, under the headship of the man. But even more than that, prayer backing, community serving, and on and on and on one could go. But in everything, that should be a ministry also to the husband.

To the husband. The point is that everything is done as a ministry of love, even as the church is subject to Christ as Lord and Head. The believer serves Christ because of love.

The wife serves the husband because of love. Wives love their husbands in that way. Another point that Paul makes, and it's the third one, that a health beat supports a husband with the dignity of love.

The dignity of love. Let the wife see that she reverence her husband. Now, many translators have watered that down.

But I don't buy it. Don't buy it. Because I've dug into that word.

Some versions use the word respect, and that's fair enough. But it robs the injunction of a whole dimension of meaning. It's one thing to respect a person.

It's quite another thing to reverence them. If a husband is a true man of God, he should be regarded with awe and reverence. And that gives a dignity, a dignity to love, instead of the sloppy stuff I see in so many homes today.

And what breaks my heart, having conducted thousands of weddings throughout my ministerial career, is to see that young couple looking into one another's eyes, seeing, seeing the young couple sitting at the table with the husband helping her to the seat, opening the car door on the right side in order to let the wife in before going around to drive. And a hundred and one other little chivalries. You know why, you know why a wife goes down the aisle? It's not known in America, and I've had to teach America and, shall I say, educate America in this.

She goes down on the left arm down the aisle, because that goes right back to antiquity. You know why? Because on that left arm, she is totally guarded and protected by the husband who can draw the sword with his right hand. If he's left-handed, well, God have mercy on him.

But the traditionally, that's where it all comes from, chivalry, consideration, and courtesy. Why? Because of the dignity of love. The very atmosphere of love like that transforms a home from the monotonous to the momentous, from the rugged to the romantic.

And that's a word to all you ladies, right from the word of God, and right from my heart. But now, gentlemen, will you please fasten your seatbelts. There are the duties of husbands in the home.

And here I would like you to turn to Ephesians chapter 5, and just keep verses 25 through 29 open. I won't read it for the sake of time, but please, please, just keep your eye on that passage. Ephesians chapter 5, Ephesians 5, chapter 5, and verses 25 through 29.

As you'll see, these words just complement what Paul says in Colossians, and they're full of very rich meaning. Now, even though I said, wives, love your husbands, actually, there is no such injunction. There is a statement in Titus that tells young wives, young wives to be loving to their husbands, but the real command, the imperative injunction, and exhortation, I call it command, is to the husband, husbands, love your wives.

And then Paul amplifies this. These words teach that a husband's love must be sacrificial in its measure. And these words boggle my mind.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for her. And, beloved, we cannot think of that, gave himself up for her, without closing our eyes for a moment, and stealing away there to Golgotha, and climbing that little hillock, and seeing our Savior give his hands and feet to those nails, and see that cross uplifted, and then seeing our blessed Savior, not only shed his blood, but shed his blood to the last drop. Brother, if you can look at that, and then say, that's how I'm to love my wife.

You've said it all. You've said it all. And no husband can love his wife like that.

I mean, no husband can love his wife like that. A total self-giving sacrifice, without receiving back reciprocal love. The husband is to love with a sacrificial love, sacrificial in its measure.

Now, are it fair to say that husbands can never attain to the degree of love which was manifested in our Lord, yet we are firmly exhorted to love with the same kind of love. And it's a love which works two ways. It

forgives and gives.

Or put it the other way, it gives and forgives. That's how love always works. It gives and gives and gives.

I've got the love. Gives, gives, gives. But it does more than that.

It forgives. And it's an interesting thing, that right here, Paul says, husbands love your wives and do not be embittered against them. And I've learned to my chagrin, and I've learned to the grief of my soul, that what's true in other countries is true right here in Australia.

That men are bitter against their wives. Not only that, they are beaters of their wives. And that can't be so if you're a Christian.

For you to love your wife, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. That love gives and gives and forgives and forgives. It's a love that can say sorry.

Not the kind that what your wife wants, not your gifts, not even the bouquets that you bring sometimes, they're wonderful, not even the basket of fruit, not the cash, not the mink fur. What they really want is just you. You.

That's why she married you. And if you can't give yourself in that kind of love, you should have never been married. I want to say a word to you pastors.

Even in our evangelistic work, before we were married, and Heather and I were engaged, we decided on this. And then after our marriage, that whether we're on the road or in a church, whatever occupied our time, one day a week was going to be set aside for each other. Over and above our nightlife, our dining life, and when the family came, our family life.

Just for each other. Duke Suite knew all about it. Calvary Baptist Church in New York City knew all about it.

In fact, they were our greatest protectors. You could have asked anybody at Calvary during our 14 years there and they would have told you, Stephen Alford says that Sunday is King's Day. He gives himself totally to preaching, but Monday is Queen's Day.

And that's where we escaped. And when the little children were too young to take care of themselves, that's the only time that Heather handed over responsibility to a babysitter. Rarely, rarely did she leave the children while they were young.

That was her conviction. But that day was Queen's Day. When the boys were older, we slipped out very often on a Sunday night, having given myself completely.

And we hired a little car. We never owned a car in New York City. We knew better than to own a car.

You'd never find it next day. And up to the mountains we'd go to a little cottage, and there we'd sleep our way through to health and strength again after a big day, and then just thoroughly live in his love with each other. That's when the whole week was planned out, and she knew where I was going, and I knew where she was going in relation to the week.

And it made all the difference to our love life. But I want to go deeper. Paul informs us that a husband's love must be spiritual in its motive.

Not only sacrificial in its measure, but spiritual in its motive. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify her and cleanse her by the washing of the water of the word. Now, I know Paul intermingles thoughts here, but don't gloss it over.

Don't gloss it over. Paul hasn't lost himself at all. Paul hasn't lost himself at all.

He's saying something tremendously important. While Paul is speaking here of the mystery, and it is a mystery concerning Christ and the church, he has in mind throughout this whole passage the relationship of husband with wife. And so he follows sacrificial love with spiritual love.

A wife should be the reflection of the spirituality of the husband. And as the husband ministers the word, not only at family altar and in choir times together, and lives out the life of Jesus in prayer, and is prophet, priest, and king in his own home, the wife becomes more and more and more beautiful, more beautiful, because she's washed, she's cleansed, she's sanctified by the ministry of a husband. From one degree of glory unto another.

And so are the children. And so are the children. And I want to say to some of you men what I said a little earlier.

If that ministry of the word is broken down in your home, you get right tonight. You get right with God. Romantic love is sanctified and fortified by the daily application of the water of the word.

And that phrase, the water of the word, implies the holy scriptures personally applied through the power of the Holy Spirit. One other point. A husband's love must be sympathetic in its manner.

Husbands also ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it just as Christ also does the church.

Just as our sympathetic system operates, so love ought to operate in your home. I go to put a picture up on the wall, and I hit the nail, and miss one nail, and hit the other nail. And instantly that finger that's being bruised registers throughout my whole body, and my head says, it wasn't once.

That happens, my brother, you know what the sympathetic system really is. My head says, she needs, it needs help. Instantly, instantly, the whole sympathetic system rushes to the need of that one finger.

Now, says Paul, that's how you take care of your body. That's how you take care of your body. That's how you take care of your wife.

She has sexual needs. She has emotional needs. She has spiritual needs.

She has physical needs. She has material needs. It's key that those needs are met by love's consideration, love's perception, love's discernment.

Peter expresses the same thing when he exhorts husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel. And you know, that word, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, in the Septuagint, actually, actually refers to that precious, romantic, and sanctified act of intimate love, which God ordained from the very beginning, and said, this is very good.

But it's more than that.

It's just an intelligent understanding of your wife, a total identification with your wife. And in these days of women's lib, these words are resented and resisted by ignorant and arrogant people. But in actual fact, the language is both positive and precious in the context of married love.

Here, Peter is instructing husbands to understand their wives, and then to undergird their wives. It calls for thoughtful and tender understanding of her spiritual, her social, her sexual, her emotional, her physical needs, as I've already said, giving honor to the weaker vessel. And that doesn't imply an inferiority.

No, no, no. No, no, no. It means this.

It implies the recognition of the delicacy of womanhood, on the one hand, and the dependency of motherhood, on the other hand. The violin and the double bass are both musical instruments, but they demand different handling, different handling. Womanhood and motherhood require loving chivalry and courtesy and consideration at all times.

And that lady of yours deserves everything her body, her mind, her spirit require. This sympathetic and sensitive love is one of the lost arts of today, because it isn't something that just falls upon you. It says, Peter, husbands dwell with their wives according to knowledge, understanding.

It's an art to live with a woman. And Peter is saying, don't miss out on that. Don't miss out on that.

The duties of the wife, the duties of the husband, the duties of the children in the home. There are the duties of the children in the home. Children are to be obedient to their parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

In Ephesians, Paul adds, children, obey your parents and the Lord for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with you, that you may dwell long on the earth. Now it's appropriate at this point just to point out something in exegesis and in the language which some people overlook.

Will you notice quickly, as you look back at either Ephesians or Colossians, how Paul deliberately places the privilege to the weaker vessel in each case. Wives before husbands, children before parents, servants before masters. This is not only a good touch in writing, it's a good taste in living.

So we come to the duties of the children, and notice there are two of them. Two of them. First of all, the duty of obedience.

The duty of obedience. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things. Now you all know, and I've said it before in these meetings, obedience is the first law of the universe, and it must be established as the first law in the home.

Just as the husband is accountable to the headship of Christ, and the wife is accountable to the headship of the husband, so the children are accountable to the authority of their parents. Obedience. Obedience.

And then Paul says, for it is right. Don't debate it. It is right.

Period. Full stop. No child is too young to obey.

Even at three months, a child can learn to obey promptly. In fact, gynecologists are telling us you can teach a child how to begin obeying while it's still in the womb. And the younger he's taught, the better he'll be in terms of future life.

The only exception in this matter of obedience is when parents ask a child to do something which is deliberately wrong or sinful, and the child is old enough to recognize the moral issue at stake, and because they obey in the Lord, they make their protest quietly and take the consequence. But otherwise, it's obedience without question. In Queensland is the same paper that tells of over 50 deaths a year by suicide, second only to driving deaths.

This is a suicide of young people between 14 and 26. And two psychiatrists who want to remain anonymous both say, reason number one, broken homes. A home where the love of Jesus is known and the authority of love isn't known.

Other reasons are there to be sure, but that's what the report says. Obedience. But along with obedience, notice the duty of loving allegiance.

Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise. Now, of course, that goes on long beyond the home. That is to say, long after the children have left the nest, long after they've been married.

They're to obey when they're under the roof. They're to obey as long as they are under the authority of their parents. But when they've left and gone their way, they're to continue to honor and to honor and to honor their parents right through until the end of life.

There's never a time when they shouldn't honor their parents. And that's one thing I'd like to say to young people here. Think of the way your parents have poured out in sacrifice to raise you and to train you, to put you through college, university, and into careers, and they've shared everything out for you because of love.

Now, when you see your parents no longer able to do what they could before, that's the time to love them, absolutely to love them, and repay them in some way by that honoring love, by that honoring love. You know, if that only happened, if that only happened, something would take place in our society. Something would take place in our society that you may not be aware of.

But I have something here I'm deliberately going to use. I brought it along for this special meeting. Oh, that Christians would prevailingly cry to God for a generation of Christian parents who will erect a mighty Christian bulwark in the nation and the church by sincerely standing with Joshua and saying, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Now, listen to this. Max Dukes lived in the state of New York. He did not believe in Christian training.

He married a girl of like character, and from this union, men have studied 1,026 descendants. 300 of them died prematurely. 100 were sent to the penitentiary, that's to jail, for an average of 13 years each.

190 were public prostitutes. There were 100 drunkards. The family cost the state \$1,200,000.

They made no helpful contribution to society whatsoever. Jonathan Edwards, the great theologian and revivalist, Jonathan Edwards, one of the greatest minds that God ever gave America, lived the same

place, the very same town, the same state. He believed in Christian training.

He married a girl of like character. From this union, men have studied that 729 descendants followed. Of this number came 300 preachers, 65 college professors, 13 university presidents, 60 authors of good books, three United States congressmen, and one vice president of the United States.

And barring one grandson who married a questionable character, the family hasn't cost the state a single dollar. The difference in the two families was caused by Christian home training and heart conversion. All right? That brings us to the duties of the parents.

The duties of the parents. Fathers, do not exasperate your children that they may not lose heart. These duties have to do with parental responsibilities, and I want to say, never were words more needed from this pulpit and from every other pulpit throughout the land and across the world.

But I want to say this, as I travel widely all across the world today, thousands upon thousands of children are neglected, abused, even destroyed. Thousands more are on the run because of unhappy homes. These poor kids end up as dope addicts, prostitutes, or thugs.

Many parents forget that children are a heritage from the Lord, and we are accountable for every single hour they spend in our presence. And so, the word says, fathers, don't exasperate your children that they may not lose heart. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Now, it's generally assumed that when Paul uses the word fathers here, he means parents and includes the wife as well, though the emphasis is on the male character. And there are three things he says as we close tonight. One, parents must be responsible for the protection of their children, the protection of their children.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger. Do not exasperate your children that they may not lose heart. When the apostle penned these words, children had no standing in society.

Any Roman father could declare his child illegitimate and drown the child or kill the child at birth. From cradle to death, the father had authority at every age. There was never a time when a child could walk out and say, now I'm a man and I stand on my own feet.

And by an act of their will, they could destroy or sentence to death at any time their own children. Life at every stage, and even in adulthood, was subject to paternal control. This, of course, has been true in other cultures.

Christianity has changed all that. The word is clear. Children are not to be provoked, irritated, or angered, lest they be broken in spirit.

Nothing is more damaging in the formative years of a little child than to be constantly nagged at, instead of encouraged. To be knocked, as this article said. Children are being knocked, knocked, instead of encouraged.

Parental protection is one of the greatest gifts God has ever given to man. You know, this matter of encouragement is so important, so important. I was ministering along this line and told the story I'm going to tell right now.

And what do you know? This was in the Barbados in the Caribbean. The whole congregation almost burst into applause. And then afterwards, I knew why.

They took me to a famous church that's a tourist attraction in Barbados, and there was the greatest painting you would ever see in your life. And it was a Benjamin West painting. But here's the story.

Here's the story. Benjamin West tells how he was a painter, but how that all started. One day, his mother went out to do some shopping and left him with a bottle, a few bottles of ink and paint, and he said he wanted to paint something.

When mother came back, you wouldn't believe it. There was paint on the all over the floor, all over the mat. It was a mess.

But there on the table lay a piece of white paper and some kind of a figure on it. And the mother went right up and said, Benjamin, that's wonderful. That's wonderful.

That's a picture of your sister. That's Sally, isn't it? And bent down and kissed him. And Benjamin West says, that kiss made me a painter.

Encourage your children. Encourage your children. Number two, parents must be responsible for the correction of their children.

Fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in discipline and instruction in the Lord. There is a place for correction. The Bible expressly states, he who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

But whether that punishment be corporal or verbal, it must not be spared when needed. However, I hasten to add that all correction should be executed prayerfully, righteously, lovingly, and helpfully. And I've chosen those words very carefully.

No correction should be given without lifting your heart even as a split second in prayer. No correction should be unexplained and unjustifiable. Then of vital importance is this matter of showing love and concern and reminding the child whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, he chastens.

Furthermore, correction must have a purposeful and helpful goal in view. This is what Solomon means when he says, train up a child in the way that he should go, even if it's a train, that when he's old, he will not depart from it. Finally, parents must be responsible for the instruction of their children.

That's why we talked about the beauty of an enlightened home. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord. Parents, you have the most wonderful privilege to teach your little tots, right from the very beginning, all about Jesus, all about Jesus.

You remember, Paul could say to Timothy, as a child, you have known the sacred writings which were able to give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ. And needless to say, instruction covers other areas than just biblical areas. But nevertheless, all instruction, basic instruction, should come from the whole.

While on this point, I have to add something which is devastating as I prayed over this. Listen, don't you ever give instruction unless you live it out. For there's nothing that speaks more loudly than your example.

What you are, shouts so loudly, I can't hear what you say. Nothing is more devastating to a tender conscience than to hear a parent say, do what I say, not what I do. And the dichotomy immediately creates a schizophrenic reaction.

It's significant that the note of caution to parents, and particularly to fathers, is phrased negatively. The verse reads, do not exasperate your children. In Ephesians, do not provoke your children to wrong.

You know, it's a tragic fact of history that Martin Luther shook from head to foot at the mention of the word father. And it is stated by historians that he could never pray what we call the Lord's Prayer, the disciple's prayer. Our father wanted him.

And do you know why it was? He found that word father stood for severity, because his father was so severe on the dear boy. Luther himself said, spare the rod and spoil the child. That's true.

That's true. And I'm quoting Luther now. But besides the rod, keep an apple to give him when he's good.

And so I say to you young men and women who are contemplating having children and bringing them up. That's what the Bible says. That's what the Bible says.

And I'd like to say one final word to all the parents here. I say to you parents, one and all, be positive with your children. Be positive with your children.

Always look on the best side of things. I absolutely love to be at a home when the children burst into laughter, and the parents join them in laughter. Somebody has described heaven in Zachariah's words, that heaven's going to be full of laughing children.

Even though they may exasperate you at times, be sure you never exasperate them. Next, be playful with your children. Man's chief joy is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

I love to see a father wrestling on the floor with his little son as they're having a little wrestling match, loving each other in the doing of it. Or a father outside with a racket or a bat or a basketball playing with his son or with his children. And likewise, you mothers as well.

Let life be fun for your children. Fun, fun, fun. A smile, a good laugh can save the day.

Next, be precious with your children. Be precious with your children. So live out the life of your precious Lord that your children will want to kiss you under any circumstance.

Heather and I have two sons, Jonathan and David, of course. And when we had Jonathan, we were already settled on what the next game was going to be if it were a boy. Jonathan is now a missionary with his sweet little wife, Catherine, and our delightful little grandson, Jeremy, in Kenya.

Serving the Lord Jesus under the banner of the AIM. You know something? He's a man. He's a father now.

But I want to tell you this. He doesn't go to bed at night when he comes home without throwing his arm around his old dad and giving him a kiss. It'll be a sad day when that doesn't happen.

I have no authority over him anymore, but he wants to honor his old dad. Our son David has just finished his Ph.D. in New Testament and is now joining our organization in biblical studies to help pastors. But I

want to tell you something.

He doesn't like to go to bed at night without kissing his mother and his father. He's living with us at the moment. He's 26 years of age.

When that kind of a hug or even the grip of a hand or possibly a kiss are absent in the home, I know trouble is brewing. Trouble is brewing. You say, Stephen Olford, but you have, you have exalted these duties to such a height, no higher than what Scripture teaches, both from the beauties and the duties.

But you say, can we arise to that? No, not in your own strength. But don't you know what our theme is? The sufficiency of the Savior for the home life. That's why we say, Lord Jesus, be glorified in my life.

Be glorified in our church. Be glorified in our home. Do you want a home built on the rock of ages, the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture? Then, beloved, take these words that have come from the exposition of this epistle as the message of God to your heart.

And tonight, if God is calling you to a new commitment in relation to your home, make that commitment. And by the power of the indwelling Spirit, under His Lordship, go out to flesh out what this city needs, this state needs, this country needs, glorious, triumphant Christian homes. Amen? Let us pray together.

We're going to sing our closing hymn, Have Thine Own Way, Lord, Have Thine Own Way. But before we rise to sing it, I want us just to have a quiet moment for silent prayer. And then it'd be a wonderful thing here tonight in this tabernacle, perhaps the purpose for which I came with a team all the way from the United States to Brisbane.

It would be wonderful to see husbands and wives holding hands together, kneeling quietly here at the front, or just standing right where you are there, just laying hold of that hand and saying, Sweetheart, that's it. That's where we come in. If God has spoken to you and you would like to express it in the sheer joy of witness and honor your Lord openly, without shame, without sham, without shrinking, while we sing tonight, why don't you just come and quietly kneel as so many did last night? And having said a prayer and confessed your commitment, just slip back to your seat, unless you seek personal counseling.

And do it without any sense of embarrassment. Do it with joy. Do it with hilarity.

Do it with dignity. Because you're obeying your Lord and you're honoring him in public. Lord, bless your word to my heart, to all our hearts.

We sit under its sentence. Nay, we kneel under its sentence and ask that you, Lord Jesus, by the power of your Spirit, will enable us to flesh out what you've taught us here tonight.

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