

S T U D Y G U I D E

Bound for Glory

R. C. Sproul Jr.



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421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771

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Printed in the United States of America.

Introduction

Western culture today is attempting to reshape the meaning and purpose of the family. This effort has affected the church more than many Christians realize. In this series, Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr. addresses this dilemma and considers how we can protect the integrity of the family for the glory of God. He reminds us that such preservation comes by the saving grace of God alone as He uses husbands, wives, children, the church, and family worship to raise up faithful families. By God's grace, as we follow the Lord's principles, future generations will be able to look back and see a faithful Christian witness to the biblical understanding of the family.

Lesson 1

The Importance of the Family

INTRODUCTION

Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr. contends that future generations will look upon our contemporary Western culture and see that the institution of the family became “utterly malleable” at the will of sinful people. This series is designed to help us resist the collapse of families and instead nurture them to the glory of God. This first lesson introduces us to some of the key family issues we face as the church of Jesus Christ.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To recognize the family as one of the four major institutions in society
2. To embrace the need for defending the honor of the family
3. To understand God’s covenantal dealings as crucial to the concept of family

SCRIPTURE READING

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

—Genesis 17:7

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. We find ourselves in the midst of a revolution against the family.
 1. Society has reshaped and even forgotten about marriage.
 2. The general public has increasingly approved of homosexual behavior.
 3. The church has a tendency to equate success with simply escaping these evils.
- B. We observe the modern American family breaking into pieces.

1. It no longer consists of a group of people truly living together.
 2. It fosters groups of individuals simply living in close proximity to each other.
 - a. Each individual exists in his or her own “apartment” space.
 - b. Individuals tend to go separate ways and not spend time together.
 3. It comes under the distortion of the devil, who leaves us with false families.
 4. It takes on a demographic flavor with everyone identifying with his or her own group.
 - a. This fosters the pursuit of one’s circle of individual interests and experiences.
 - b. These divided interests give rise to non-relational generation gaps.
 5. The church often does not fare any better.
 - a. We tend to split up into different groups and classes even in corporate settings.
 - b. We miss God’s placement of us in families as families.
- C. We address this dilemma by first recognizing the family as one of four societal institutions.
1. The individual accounts for the first institution.
 - a. The individual does not appear very “institutional” but God established it as a basic unit.
 - b. For the encouragement of obedience, God gave the conscience to the individual.
 2. The family accounts for the second institution.
 - a. God brings together a group of individuals to make up a family.
 - b. For the encouragement of obedience, God gave the rod, exercised in the parent-child relationship, to the family.
 3. The church accounts for the third institution.
 - a. God calls together a group of individuals to form the body of Christ.
 - b. For the encouragement of obedience, God gave the power of the keys, or church discipline, to the church.
 4. The state accounts for the fourth institution.
 - a. God established the state to be the minister of justice.
 - b. For the encouragement of obedience, God gave the sword to the state.
 5. Today’s society tends to minimize the two mediating institutions.
 - a. The family and the church are the “mediating” institutions, in terms of size and influence, between the individual and the state.
 - b. The individual and the state tend to take precedence at the expense of the family and the church, pressuring and curtailing these middle two.
- D. We begin a response to this breakdown by embracing the covenantal nature of families.
1. Biblical covenants overlap contracts to some degree but not entirely.

2. Contracts involve negotiations between two parties but God alone establishes covenants.
3. Someone can make a contract with an individual, but God makes covenants corporately as seen in the oft-repeated biblical phrase “you and your children.”
4. Thus, God deals with families by way of divinely imposed covenants, while putting us as individuals into families.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Hundreds of years from now, the primary observation people will make on our contemporary society is that we radically reshaped the institution of the family.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. This series in general provides help to resist the collapse of the family in our contemporary Western culture.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Which of the following institutions is not very institutional?
 - a. Individual
 - b. Family
 - c. Church
 - d. State
4. Which of the following institutions rightly uses the sword to encourage obedience?
 - a. Individual
 - b. Family
 - c. Church
 - d. State
5. Which of the following are “mediating” institutions that tend to get minimized in society?
 - a. Individual
 - b. Family
 - c. Church
 - d. Both b and c
6. Which of the following are true of biblical covenants?
 - a. They usually involve negotiations between God and man
 - b. They are most often made with individuals
 - c. They overlap contracts to some degree
 - d. Both a and b

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name at least one contemporary event that evidences the claim that the institution of the family has been distorted at the will of sinful people.
2. In a context of encouraging love and obedience to the Lord, Deuteronomy 6:7 exhorts the Israelites, “*You shall teach [the commands of the Lord] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*” What does this passage imply concerning the splintering of families we see today?
3. Building upon what you learned in the lesson, name three specific ways you have observed the church mirroring contemporary society by breaking up families in its worship and life.
4. If we are going to respond as Christians to the breakdown of the family, why is it so important to emphasize God’s covenantal dealings with us as families rather than individuals?

Lesson 2

The Function of the Family

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, Dr. Sproul addresses the function of the family through the background and text of Genesis 2:18. Here, God declared that it was “not good” for Adam to be alone. As a result, he made Eve as Adam’s helper in their common dominion mandate. God called them to expand their garden paradise with the family growing and spreading with it throughout the earth. The fall made this task painful, toilsome, and impossible to completely carry out. Yet, we see that the call remains and is ultimately fulfilled in Christ as His glorious reign expands throughout the world.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To realize how God could see something not good in an otherwise good creation
2. To understand that God provided Eve in order to help Adam fulfill the dominion mandate as a submissive equal
3. To embrace the proper call to fulfill this mandate as it remains after the fall especially in Christ

SCRIPTURE READING

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

—Genesis 2:18

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. Even before the fall, God saw something not good in the garden.
 1. In the beginning, God created the world good and assessed it as such (Gen. 1–2).
 - a. This good creation existed before the fall.
 - b. Sin entered into the picture later with the “cunning” serpent (Gen. 3).
 2. In this context, God still saw something not good.

- a. This was the case even with sin and Satan absent (Gen. 2:18).
 - b. God based this assessment on the fact that Adam was alone.
- B. Adam's solitude was not good because of the dominion mandate.
1. Most Christian books deal with this solitude incorrectly.
 - a. Some see the woman counterbalancing man's weakness.
 - b. Some see the woman fulfilling man's relational need for communion.
 - c. Some see the woman given to wait on man.
 2. A right understanding of this solitude takes a close look at the garden.
 - a. Only four characters existed there.
 - b. A limited geography spanned it.
 - c. A brief history unfolded within it.
 - d. It exhibited a microcosmic world.
 3. Adam's solitude meant fulfilling God's mandate by himself.
 - a. God required him to multiply and fill the earth.
 - b. God required him to subdue the earth and rule over it.
 4. Adam could not fulfill this task alone.
 - a. Thus, God assessed Adam's solitude as something "not good."
 - b. God provided Eve to help with the mandate.
 - c. God provided the family to keep the garden and bring glory to Himself.
 5. God wanted Adam to expand the garden.
 - a. Before sin and death, bearing children demanded more space.
 - b. Adam and Eve needed to further not just keep the garden.
 - c. They were to creatively mold and reshape the expanding garden.
 6. God gave Eve as a suitable helper in this dominion mandate.
 - a. She existed as Adam's equal in such assistance.
 - b. God still called her to submit to Adam's authority.
- C. Eve's submission as a helper did not mean that she possessed lesser value.
1. The paradigm for this comes in the Trinity.
 - a. In the Trinity, the Son submits to the Father, and the Spirit submits to both.
 - b. Such submission does not mean inferiority.
 - c. Within in the *ontological* Trinity, equal power and dignity remain.
 - d. Within the *economic* Trinity, the Son and the Spirit submit.
 2. Authority did not mean superiority for Adam.
 - a. Husbands lead their wives not for the comfort of husbands.
 - b. Husbands lead their wives for the fulfillment of the dominion mandate.
- D. The dominion mandate remains after the fall.
1. Sin affected the fulfillment of the dominion mandate.
 - a. Sin made Adam and Eve "stupid," as they tried to hide from God.
 - b. Sin made Adam "cowardly," as he hid behind Eve.
 - c. Sin made Adam "brazen," as he blamed God for his sin.

- d. This may lead us to believe that the mandate was totally lost due to sin.
2. The mandate still remains.
 - a. God informed Eve of birth pains, yet the call to multiply still remained.
 - b. God told Adam of toilsome labor, yet the call to subdue still remained.
 - c. These calls did not just survive the fall, but continued even after the flood.
3. The remaining mandate must be rightly understood.
 - a. Men might think that their work is most important.
 - b. Instead, their wives are to be the center of their “garden.”
 - c. Furthering God’s reign in the kingdom of Christ remains the ultimate goal in life.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Even before the fall, God saw something in His good creation that was “not good.”
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Adam and Eve were called not only to keep the garden, but also to expand and further the garden as well.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Why was it not good for Adam to be alone?
 - a. Because of the serpent
 - b. Because of Adam’s relational incompleteness
 - c. Because of Adam’s limitations as a man
 - d. Because of Adam’s inability to fulfill his mandate alone
4. Which of the following reflect the garden as a microcosm of the world?
 - a. The four characters that existed within it
 - b. The limited geography that spanned its boundaries
 - c. The brief history unfolded within it
 - d. All of the above
5. In what manner does the Trinity show that submission does not imply inferiority?
 - a. The obedience of the Son to the Father
 - b. Three persons with equal power economically
 - c. Submission within the Trinity ontologically
 - d. All of the above
6. Which of the following is true of the creation mandate after the fall?
 - a. The removal of the call to multiply
 - b. The removal of the call to exercise dominion
 - c. Its continuation after the flood

d. All of the above

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Dr. Sproul suggests that books focusing solely on Adam's relational needs as the reason for Eve's existence miss the mark. Explain.
2. How does the call to "gardenize the jungle" relate to man's creative abilities in the image of God?
3. How does the kingdom of Christ affect the mandate to multiply and exercise dominion?
4. How does the Trinity inform husbands about the care they must exercise in their authority over their wives?

Lesson 3

Husbands, Part 1

INTRODUCTION

Jesus works to bring all things under His submission. One day, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. Such dominion parallels the mandate God gave Adam, as Christ sanctifies His bride, the church. God calls husbands to be a part of this sanctification, as they treat their wives as the center of their “garden.” They must labor, by God’s grace, to sanctify their wives as Christ does the church. This lesson addresses husbands and their task to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To realize the call of husbands to give of themselves for the sanctification of their wives
2. For husbands to see the importance of *praying for* not *about* their wives
3. For husbands to pursue growth in grace, since wives reflect the spiritual condition of their husbands

SCRIPTURE READING

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

—Ephesians 5:25

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. God did not call husbands to die hypothetical deaths for their wives.
 1. Husbands readily see the call to die for wives as Christ did for the church.
 2. They unfortunately get the wrong idea of what this means.
 - a. Husbands would literally die for their wives if called to do so.
 - b. They see Christ’s death as the model.
 - c. They often fail to realize that Christ did not die a hypothetical death.

3. God obliges husbands to make a genuine sacrifice for their wives.
 - a. This involves more than the little matters of life.
 - b. This involves dying to self in a major way.
- B. God calls husbands to sanctify their wives as Christ does the church, His bride.
1. This involves helping wives bear the fruit of the spirit.
 2. This avoids the “diabolical art of simultaneous translation.”
 - a. The devil tempts us to lighten the demands of Scripture.
 - b. The call of the evangelical church to simply be “nicer” does not help.
 - c. The task for husbands remains deeper and more profound.
 3. This difficult challenge involves helping wives grow in grace and wisdom.
 - a. First, this entails being self-conscious of the calling.
 - b. Second, this entails praying *spiritually for* not *about* wives.
 - c. Third, this entails remembering that wives spiritually reflect their husbands.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. As Christ sanctifies the church as His bride, He fulfills the dominion mandate given to Adam.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Husbands should view their work or vocation as the center of the “garden” in which they labor.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Regarding the death to which God calls husbands for their wives, most Christian husbands _____.
 - a. See the need for it
 - b. Are willing to physically lay down their lives
 - c. See Christ as their model
 - d. All of the above
4. The following relates to the “hypothetical” death that husbands die for their wives.
 - a. The willingness to physically die
 - b. The real death Christ died
 - c. The giving of themselves spiritually in love
 - d. All of the above
5. Which of the following are true when we perform the “diabolical art of simultaneous translation”?

- a. The devil resists us from it
 - b. The truth becomes more challenging
 - c. The preaching we hear might call us to simply be nicer
 - d. All of the above
6. The following manifests the husband's quest to help his wife grow in grace.
 - a. Consciousness of his call
 - b. Prayer for his wife
 - c. Spiritual growth in his own life
 - d. All of the above

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. A marriage counselor once said, "Wives do not care so much whether their husbands will die for them but whether they will live for them." Discuss how this relates to the "hypothetical" death husbands are willing to die.
2. Discuss how our Scripture reading of Ephesians 5:25 relates to the call of husbands to truly "die" as they follow the pattern of Christ in Mark 10:45: "*For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*"
3. Discuss a specific instance when you or someone else you know has practiced the "diabolical art of simultaneous translation."
4. Discuss a specific way husbands tend to pray *about* their wives and a specific way they should pray *for* them. Close this discussion with such a prayer *for* wives.

Lesson 4

Husbands, Part 2

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Sproul tells husbands to remember the obvious: “You’re not Jesus, and, in fact, you need Jesus.” He belabors this simple truth, because a husband can all too easily place himself on the same level as Christ. A husband certainly has the call to love, sanctify, and exercise authority as Christ does (Eph. 5). However, sin causes the parallel to break down, while the call to be like Him remains. This lesson, then, focuses on the duties of husbands to emulate Christ in His threefold office (*munus triplex*) of prophet, priest, and king.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To remember that husbands are not Jesus, and, in fact, need Him
2. For husbands to see the need to be like Christ, even though sin gets in the way
3. For husbands to imitate Christ in His threefold office of prophet, priest, and king

SCRIPTURE READING

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

—Ephesians 5:23

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. God calls husbands, in imitation of Jesus, to act as prophets in respect to their families.
 1. We tend to limit prophecy to new revelation.
 - a. Indeed, prophets related what was yet to happen.
 - b. For example, prediction of the seventy-year exile and return from it came as a prophetic message.
 - c. Still, God primarily expected the prophet to simply speak on His behalf.

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2. We need to recognize the prophet's principal role as God's lawyer.
 - a. The prophet functioned as God's mouthpiece to bring His words to His people.
 - b. This role typically existed in the context of bringing a "covenant lawsuit."
 - c. For example, Malachi was a "prosecutor" of covenant breakers.
 3. Husbands likewise minister the Word to their wives.
 - a. They speak words on behalf of God.
 - b. They cannot say anything for God if they do not listen to God.
- B. God calls husbands, in imitation of Jesus, to act as priests in respect to their families.
1. The prophet speaks for God, while the priest speaks to God for the people.
 2. Jesus fulfills the office of priest in two ways.
 - a. He functions as an intermediary who offers a sacrifice.
 - b. He functions as a substitution who is the sacrifice.
 3. Husbands cannot be an atoning sacrifice.
 - a. We are worse than the animals sacrificed in the Old Testament.
 - b. We cannot atone for sin, if we need atonement ourselves.
 4. Still, in Christ, husbands play an intermediary role.
 - a. They bring their families before the mercy seat of God to plead for them.
 - b. They retain the privilege to pray for their families.
 - c. They have the responsibility to pray for them rather than complain about them.
 5. This intermediary role takes place not only vertically but also horizontally.
 - a. It takes place vertically by appealing to God.
 - b. It takes place horizontally by mediating relationships on a human level.
- C. God calls husbands, in imitation of Jesus, to act as kings in respect to their families.
1. We think of kings as those with all of the privileges.
 - a. We must see that wealth and power are not the defining qualities of kings.
 - b. We must recognize that duty to the people exists as the defining quality.
 - c. A good king fosters good people, while a bad king fosters bad people.
 2. Husbands set the tone for their families.
 - a. They must answer for the condition of their families.
 - b. The responses of the family, "the people," reflect the condition of the husband, "the king."
 3. There certainly are privileges for the husband "king."
 - a. He has the opportunity to do great things for the "kingdom" of Christ.
 - b. He must not demand the benefit of having "citizens" do great things for him.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Husbands do not need to hear the obvious truth, “You’re not Jesus, in fact, you need Jesus.”
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. Though the parallel of husbands’ acting as Christ breaks down due to sin, the call to be like Him remains.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Which of the following belong directly to the threefold office of Christ?
 - a. Speaking on behalf of God to the people
 - b. Offering a sacrifice to the Father
 - c. Defending and protecting the people
 - d. All of the above

4. The role of _____ concerns husband’s rightly acting almost as a prosecutor for God.
 - a. Prophet
 - b. Priest
 - c. King
 - d. None of the above

5. The role of _____ concerns husbands rightly acting as an atoning sacrifice for their wives.
 - a. Prophet
 - b. Priest
 - c. King
 - d. None of the above

6. The role of _____ concerns husbands rightly answering for their families.
 - a. Prophet
 - b. Priest
 - c. King
 - d. None of the above

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss one way you have observed a husband, maybe yourself, forgetting the obvious truth, “You are not Christ, in fact, you need Christ.”
2. How does the obvious truth, “You are not Christ, in fact, you need Christ,” help us to fulfill the call to be like Him even though we often fail miserably to do so?
3. Discuss one specific way each how the husband’s role as a “prosecutor” for God can go right and wrong. Use Galatians 6:1 to help you in this discussion: *“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”*
4. Dr. Sproul closes this lesson with the helpful statement, *“Husbands, it’s good to be the king because you have the opportunity to do great things for the kingdom, not because your citizens have to do great things for you.”* Imagine that you were talking to a young man about to get married. Use this statement to explain to him what it means to be the head of his home.

Lesson 5

Wives, Part 1

INTRODUCTION

We come to Ephesians 5:22, a controversial text that tells wives to submit to their husbands. Dr. Sproul calls this verse “the great evangelical ‘yes but’ passage.” The “yes” that wants to observe the mandate in the text faces the resistance of the “but” protesting against such submission. Yet, the text remains simple and clear and there should be no “buts” for the Christian. This lesson, then, explains how wives are to submit to their husbands in connection with the qualifications related to this verse.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. For wives to embrace the clear call to submit to their husbands in spite of the world’s resistance
2. To see that wives submit in a qualified way to their “own” husbands and “as to the Lord”
3. To understand that such submission to some degree contains no limitations

SCRIPTURE READING

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

—Ephesians 5:22–24

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. The call for wives to submit to their husbands remains clear and simple.
 1. In spite of the world’s resistance, there should be no “but” protests for Christians.
 - a. Great cultural momentum pushes against this text.
 - b. It reaches the point where most reject submission altogether.

2. One objection expresses the concern that submission turns women into “doormats.”
 - a. If this means that husbands should not be jerks, the protest stands.
 - b. If this means that wives should not submit, the protest falls.
- B. The words “own husbands” qualify the call for wives to submit to their husbands.
 1. They are to submit to their “own” husbands, not to other men.
 2. They are not called to meet expectations of other people or standards other than their husbands, which must be kingdom priorities.
- C. The words “as to the Lord” qualify the call for wives to submit to their husbands.
 1. This concerns the nature of submission.
 - a. For example, it should be willing and cheerful.
 - b. It should not be disgruntled or delayed.
 2. This concerns the limitation of submission.
 - a. Wives cannot “clearly” disobey Christ in order to obey their husbands.
 - b. Wives must submit in areas where disobedience to Christ lacks clarity.
- D. The words “in everything” qualify the call for wives to submit to their husbands.
 1. In principle, there are no limitations for areas of submission.
 - a. There are no separate realms for husbands and wives where the latter gets free rein as, for example, in taking care of babies.
 - b. The only area where women have such authority concerns the marriage bed (1 Cor. 7:3–4).
 - c. This does not mean that husbands may not delegate authority to their wives.
 2. Truly, wives are expected to submit to their husbands in all areas.
 - a. Such an obligation remains a challenge.
 - b. Such an obligation remains countercultural.
 - c. Such an obligation still remains.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Dr. Sproul calls Ephesians 5:22, the call for wives to submit to their husbands, “the great evangelical ‘yes but’ passage.”
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. The “but” is a necessary qualification to keep men from abusing authority.
 - a. True
 - b. False

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3. Which of the following qualifies as treating a woman like a “doormat” in the use of authority?
 - a. Acting like a jerk
 - b. Asking for supper at a certain time
 - c. Expecting her to submit in everything
 - d. All of the above

 4. Which of the following does God expect of wives?
 - a. Submission to their own husbands
 - b. Submission to other husbands in general
 - c. Submission to their own parents
 - d. All of the above

 5. In which of the following would a wife fail to submit to her husband “as to the Lord”?
 - a. Submitting but not right away
 - b. Not submitting when asked to disobey God
 - c. Submitting while questioning his wisdom
 - d. Both a and c

 6. That a wife submits to her husband “in everything” does not deny _____.
 - a. Authority over him at special times
 - b. His delegation of authority to her
 - c. The challenge of such a task
 - d. All of the above

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you respond to a neighbor who says that the Bible allows Christian men to treat their wives like “doormats”?

2. An engaged young lady at church, after a sermon on Ephesians 5:22–24, asks the pastor, “So, let me get this straight—wives are supposed to submit to their husbands in *everything*? Really? Everything?” How could he respond to her in truth and love?

3. Set forth one concrete example each for a situation when a wife rightly and wrongly disobeys her husband while appealing to the phrase “as to the Lord.”

4. Describe in a couple of different ways how the submission of wives to their “own” husbands is liberating.

Lesson 6

Wives, Part 2

INTRODUCTION

In the last lesson, we began looking at the verse that receives more cultural resistance than any other text in Scripture. The call of wives to submit to their husbands in Ephesians 5:22 remains difficult even for many evangelicals to accept today. Unfortunately, they often dilute what the text clearly says. We saw that there are indeed qualifiers in the text, but they actually strengthen the call for submission. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul considers the reasons why so much unfavorable response against this text exists and how we should respond to it.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand how sinful husbands and the spirit of the age discourage wives from biblical submission
2. For wives to realize how the fall has influenced their hearts to resist submission to husbands
3. To embrace the gospel of Christ as the solution to this submission problem

SCRIPTURE READING

To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

—Genesis 3:16

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. Sinful husbands foster the resistance of women to submit to their husbands.
 1. Husbands can be selfish “jerks.”
 - a. They may fail to use their authority for the well-being of their wives.
 - b. They may fail to use their authority for the building of Christ’s kingdom.
 - c. They may abuse their authority for their own comfort.

2. Husbands often have the wrong idea about authority.
 - a. They may think that it means getting everything they want.
 - b. They fail to see the responsibility for others that comes with such authority.
 3. There also exists abuse in other authority situations.
 - a. A mother with authority over her children can behave badly.
 - b. The government that rules over a people can abuse its power.
 4. Certainly, God calls husbands to servant leadership.
 - a. For many, servant leadership becomes all service and no leadership.
 - b. True servant leadership rules selflessly for the building of Christ's kingdom.
- B. The spirit of the age fosters the resistance of women to submit to their husbands.
1. The spiritual declension of our society, culturally speaking, discourages the submission of wives.
 2. We are tempted to think that fifty to a hundred years ago, biblical thinking held greater sway in this area.
 3. Many think that we combat feminism by moving back to such times.
 - a. However, these times actually reflected an earlier Victorian notion of weak femininity rather than a biblical image of women.
 - b. We can identify with those who despise characterizing women as frail and incapable.
 4. From the time of the garden, the dominion mandate required much of women.
 - a. The dominion mandate required the diligence of women as helpers.
 - b. In the one-flesh relationship of marriage, women need to be viewed as Proverbs 31 contributors to a single economic unit.
 - c. We need to honor such a calling.
- C. The curse on women at the time of the fall fosters their resistance to submit to their husbands.
1. God cursed the serpent after he tempted Eve.
 2. God then cursed the woman in Genesis 3:16.
 - a. In addition to her pain in childbearing, God speaks of her "desire" for her husband.
 - b. This denotes her craving to rule over Adam, to "wear the pants in the family."
 - c. A double curse occurs, since the longing fulfilled brings misery outside of God's design for women.
- D. The gospel provides the solution for the resistance against the submission of wives.
1. God's call for submission remains an invitation to rejoice in it.
 - a. God made wives to live this way.
 - b. The curse drives women away from this calling.

2. The call to repent and believe the gospel restores women to the place of blessing.
 - a. Forgiveness of sins brings release from the curse.
 - b. Restoration to obedience and the place of blessing then occurs.
3. The focus on wives continues to address men.
 - a. Husbands retain the duty to encourage submission.
 - b. Husbands must accept responsibility for the lack of submission.
 - c. Husbands must seek the Lord in the absence or decline of submission.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Evangelicals today often dilute the call of wives to submit to their husbands.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. The qualifiers in the submission text of Ephesians 5:22 actually strengthen that call.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. All of the following except _____ discourage wives from submitting to their husbands.
 - a. The sinfulness of husbands
 - b. The spirit of the age
 - c. The effects of the fall on wives
 - d. Other biblical passages
4. Husbands do not encourage submission in their wives when they _____.
 - a. Act as a protector
 - b. Seek their own comfort
 - c. Keep speaking of Christ
 - d. All of the above
5. Which of the following help us to defend the call of wives to submit even though husbands are given to abuse their authority?
 - a. The harshness of mothers to children
 - b. The tyranny of governments to citizens
 - c. The meanness of bosses to employees
 - d. All of the above
6. Which of the following offsets feminism's opposition to the submission of wives?
 - a. Getting back to the Victorian era
 - b. Viewing feminism as a recent issue
 - c. Removing women from the workplace
 - d. Having husbands take responsibility

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. A wife at church complains about her lazy, selfish husband who does nothing at home but order her around. “You want me to submit to him?” she asks. How would you respond to her?
2. A recently married young man once said, “My wife is awesome. She is so submissive. She does whatever I tell her.” What does he need to hear?
3. Using the concepts of the dominion mandate and the “Proverbs 31 woman,” respond to this claim: “Wives need to be the way they used to be, like June Cleaver of ‘Leave It to Beaver.’”
4. Why is it erroneous to think that feminism is a new problem? How should we respond to it with the gospel and without appealing to some prior “golden age”?

Lesson 7

Children

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, Dr. Sproul focuses on God's call to children in the family, especially from the clear instruction in Ephesians 6 to obey parents in the Lord. Why should they obey? Simply, because God said so. Not only that, He also promises a good life to those who obey. Furthermore, fathers must not shy away from the directive to raise their children in the Lord, though they must beware of stirring up rebellion in their children. In the end, fathers must lead their families to find their identity in the Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the call to children in the family to obey their parents in the Lord
2. To recognize the underlying motivation for such in the Lord's command and promise
3. To connect the children's obedience with their fathers' encouragement of it in word and life

SCRIPTURE READING

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

—Ephesians 6:1–4

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. God clearly and simply sets forth the obligation of children to obey their parents.
 1. There exists no mystery in the mandate.
 2. Children are clearly taught to obey their parents in the Lord.

3. They are not told to actualize their values, discover who they are, or get in touch with their dreams.
- B. God provides the motivation for this obedience.
1. Children must obey, “for this is right” before the eyes of the Lord.
 2. Children should also obey, since God promises that life will “go well” for them.
- C. God warns fathers not to discourage this obedience.
1. Fathers are not to provoke their children to anger.
 - a. Many tend to view this as a kind of counterbalance to the call for obedience.
 - b. We can end up concluding that this says, “Do not push them too hard.”
 - c. We finally reach the position that we do not actually expect obedience.
 2. The caution must be heard without viewing it as a “hands-off” soft approach.
 - a. Rebellion does not come from the precise expectations of parents.
 - b. Rebellion comes from the sinful hearts of teens.
 - c. The hypocrisy and selfishness of parents foster such rebellion.
- D. God calls fathers to raise their children in the training and admonition of the Lord.
1. The call to raise children in the culture of the Lord follows the above caution.
 - a. The “training” or “nurture” here comes from the Greek word *paideia*.
 - b. This idea refers to a shared life experience or culture.
 2. The culture of the devil must be avoided.
 - a. The devil has his own plan and culture for our children.
 - b. He has a “faux” family in mind, an identity group that takes children away from families and the Lord.
 - c. This happens with the age-group identities so prevalent in our society.
 3. We must actively seek to raise our children in the culture of the Lord.
 - a. We want them to identify with the Lord not ultimately their age group or us.
 - b. If we are passive, the children will still be raised by a sinfully eager culture.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. It is always wrong to tell children to obey “because I said so.”
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. It can be appropriate to motivate the obedience of a child by promising a reward.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Which of the following does God instruct children to do?
 - a. Obey their parents
 - b. Follow their dreams
 - c. Discover themselves
 - d. All of the above

4. Which of the following should we *not* hear with the warning “do not provoke your children to anger”?
 - a. “This offsets the call to obey”
 - b. “Do not push them too hard”
 - c. “Do not expect obedience all the time”
 - d. All of the above

5. All of the following except _____ encourage the rebellion of children.
 - a. Their precise parents
 - b. Their selfish parents
 - c. Their hypocritical parents
 - d. Their sinful hearts

6. Raising our children in “the culture of the Lord” involves which of the following?
 - a. Ignoring the devil’s plan
 - b. Passive reliance
 - c. Identifying with Christ
 - d. All of the above

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the command for children to obey parents “in the Lord” parallel the directive for wives to submit to husbands “as to the Lord”?
2. Why is the warning “do not provoke your children to anger” addressed to fathers and not parents?
3. A mother in the church argues, “Delayed obedience is still obedience, and it avoids pushing our children too hard.” How would you respond to her?
4. A father by the name of “Mr. Smith” encourages good behavior in his child when he goes outside the home by saying, “Remember, son, you are a Smith!” Is this an appropriate reminder? Why or why not?

Lesson 8

The Role of the Church

INTRODUCTION

In our series so far, we have learned wonderful truths from God's Word concerning His desires and promises for families. Someone might argue that such instruction becomes overly optimistic as we lose sight of the fact that we are dealing with sinners when we address families. Dr. Sproul reminds us that God remains aware of this dilemma. Indeed, sin and hardship deeply affect our families, but the Lord does not leave us to ourselves. In this lesson, then, we consider the role of the church in our quest for godly families.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To view the God we serve as one who cares for families marred by sin
2. To recognize the church as an institution called to assist in the progress of families
3. To embrace the call as the church to be a family of families and a family to the family-less

SCRIPTURE READING

Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

—Psalm 68:5–6

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. God has always cared for families facing hardship and sin.
 1. Psalm 68:5–6 presents this care in a wonderful way.
 - a. God fathers the fatherless.
 - b. God defends the widows.
 - c. God puts the solitary into families.

2. God utilized Israel as a nation to help those in need.
 - a. From this collective community emerged systems to help others.
 - b. The book of Ruth manifests how God did this in the lives of Ruth and Naomi.
- B. God uses the church for this ministry today.
1. The church functions as a family of families yet something more.
 2. The church also exists as a family to the family-less.
 - a. Consider the story of the man who abandoned his wife and two children.
 - b. Consider the story of the unfaithful husband and father of three.
 3. The church is not a collection of individuals but the body of Christ.
 - a. We are called to heal the wounded.
 - b. We are called to strengthen the weak.
 - c. We are not called to point people to the government.
 - d. We are called to rescue orphans and widows, as part of true religion not as something extraordinary.
 4. The church must be viewed as a court of appeals through those who govern.
 - a. Within the church as a family, elders are called as “patriarchs” who rule.
 - b. Wives and husbands have the liberty to appeal to them.
 - c. Elders are to be grace-minded, but they must also deal with sin.
 - d. The refusal of elders to use discipline exemplifies “horribly bad parenting.”
 5. We must fix the church in order to fix the family.
 - a. The church is called to help families.
 - b. The individual and government pressure the church and family.
 - c. These two mediating institutions then turn and bite each other.
 - d. They end up having to fix each other.
 6. We all have a place in the church as a family of families.
 - a. Everyone in the church has a place in the family of God.
 - b. At the same time, we are all part of the bride of Christ, our husband.
 - c. Jesus as the second Adam exists as the father of us all.
 - d. The church as the second Eve exists as the mother of us all.
 - e. Honoring these family ideas makes the church attractive to others.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The role of the church helps gives hope when addressing families deeply marred by sin.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. The role of the church to fix families finds its foundation in God, who is the Father of the fatherless.
 - a. True
 - b. False

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3. The church exists as more than a family of families; it also functions as a family to the family-less.
 - a. True
 - b. False

 4. All of the following except _____ are said of God in our Scripture reading, Psalm 68:5-6.
 - a. He is the Father of the fatherless
 - b. He acts like a hen gathering chicks
 - c. He is the defender of widows
 - d. He puts the solitary into families

 5. Which of the following manifest God's care for families affected by sin and hardship?
 - a. His role as a Father
 - b. His use of Israel as a nation
 - c. His care of Naomi and Ruth
 - d. All of the above

 6. Which of the following are true of the church as a "court of appeals" for families?
 - a. Its elders act as patriarchs
 - b. Its discipline shows good parenting
 - c. Its grace-mindedness upholds the law
 - d. All of the above

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the truth that the church is not just a family of families but a family to the family-less, challenge mature Christian families to reach out to those who face hard times?

2. Give at least three concrete ways that the evangelical church can take its identity as a family more seriously.

3. Dr. Sproul said that husbands and wives have the liberty to appeal to elders as a "court" in the church. Does this freedom exist when we learn of the problems of others? Why or why not?

4. Dr. Sproul claims, "You can't fix the family without fixing the church," and, at the same time, "You can't fix the church without fixing the family." Related to the church and family as mediating institutions, explain Dr. Sproul's rationale.

Lesson 9

Family Worship

INTRODUCTION

This final lesson focuses on what Dr. Sproul considers “a royal waste of time,” a phrase that comes from the title of a book on worship. Worship remains a “waste of time,” because we do not use it as a means to get something else done. Rather, worship is the ultimate reason for which God created us. We call it a “royal” waste of time, because it focuses on King Jesus. With family worship in this category, we come to consider it as part of our “chief end,” namely, to glorify and enjoy God forever.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand why we engage in family worship as a part of our general worship
2. To consider some suggested guidelines for family worship and the manner in which we conduct it
3. To take encouragement and initiative for actually carrying out family worship

SCRIPTURE READING

Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

—Psalm 73:25–26

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. Family worship is one of the ways we worship God.
 1. The Puritans understood that God created us as worshiping beings.
 - a. Thus, they regarded glorifying and enjoying God as our chief end.
 - b. They inherited this emphasis from Reformers such as John Calvin, who saw worship as the most important principle for the church to recover.
 2. Our worship works itself out in three specific ways.
 - a. Corporate worship involves the gathering of the church on the Lord’s Day.

- b. Private worship involves our individual Bible reading, meditation, and prayer.
 - c. Family worship falls between corporate and private worship.
- B. Family worship brings blessings, but many cannot explain why we do it.
- 1. It remains a calming, peaceful activity.
 - 2. It teaches children how to participate in corporate worship.
 - 3. In the end, we carry it out, because we were made for worship.
- C. Family worship can be helped by the following suggestions.
- 1. A regular time
 - a. We could do it between dinner and bedtime.
 - b. This helps foster regularity because dinner and sleep are typically routine.
 - 2. Gathering together
 - a. Perhaps this occurs around the dinner table.
 - b. We just need simple items such as a Bible and a catechism book.
 - c. It helps to put aside distractions such as food, cellphones, and small talk.
 - 3. Catechism memory work
 - a. This is an ancient method of teaching core Christian truths.
 - b. We can use age-appropriate catechism books.
 - 4. Bible memory work, for example, in the Psalms
 - a. The Psalms readily act like “mini Bibles” teaching much truth.
 - b. The Psalms were originally written as songs to be memorized.
 - 5. Discussing a particular Bible text
 - a. It can be a small portion.
 - b. It can involve just a brief discussion.
 - 6. Prayer time
 - a. We can take prayer requests.
 - b. We do well to give thanks for answered prayers.
 - 7. Singing
 - a. We can take requests for a psalm or hymn.
 - b. We can take turns as to who picks the content to be sung.
- D. Family worship can make a profound impact on our lives.
- 1. We remember God’s involvement in our lives.
 - 2. We remember that He hears our prayers.
 - 3. We remember that we live constantly *coram Deo*, “before the face of God.”
 - 4. We foster family identity and unity.
- E. Family worship cannot be done if we do not do it.
- 1. In other words, we have to decide to do it.
 - 2. This may mean starting by confessing the failure to do it.
 - 3. Forgiven, we can worship together.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Dr. Sproul argues that we do family worship to keep our lives from becoming a “royal waste of time.”
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. God created us so that we would worship Him.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. To which of the following ways of worship does God call us?
 - a. Private worship
 - b. Family worship
 - c. Corporate worship
 - d. All of the above
4. We should conduct family worship because it is _____.
 - a. A calming, peaceful activity
 - b. A preparation for corporate worship
 - c. Something for which God created us
 - d. None of the above
5. Which of the following are given in this lesson for how we must do family worship?
 - a. Between dinner and bedtime
 - b. With a very brief discussion of a Bible text
 - c. With catechism questions
 - d. None of the above
6. Family worship helps us to remember the following:
 - a. God is involved in our lives
 - b. God hears prayers
 - c. Our lives are *coram Deo*
 - d. All of the above

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After a sermon on worship mentions family worship, a young father says, “The Bible nowhere commands family worship.” How would you respond?
2. How does corporate worship encourage family worship?
3. How does private worship encourage family worship?
4. Apart from the suggestions given by Dr. Sproul, can you provide any others to help families in their own worship time?

Answer Key for Study Questions

Lesson 1

1. a
2. a
3. a
4. d
5. d
6. c

Lesson 2

1. a
2. a
3. d
4. d
5. a
6. c

Lesson 3

1. a
2. b
3. d
4. a
5. c
6. d

Lesson 4

1. b
2. a
3. d
4. a
5. d
6. c

Lesson 5

1. a
2. b
3. c
4. a
5. a
6. d

Lesson 6

1. a
2. a
3. d
4. b
5. d
6. d

Lesson 7

1. b
2. a
3. a
4. d
5. a
6. c

Lesson 8

1. a
2. a
3. b
4. b
5. d
6. d

Lesson 9

1. b
2. a
3. d
4. c
5. d
6. d