

FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAMILY



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PREFACE

I believe wholeheartedly in the importance of family. I am the biggest advocate for any husband and wife who are building their marriage on the Cornerstone, Jesus. I am the crazy fan who shouts louder than arena music whenever I see parents stepping into raising and disciplining their children, building their lives on the Rock of Jesus. Anything built to last requires a strong foundation. As Jesus says, ***"Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock"*** (Matthew 7:24).

In this world, the meaning and function of the family are often questioned and challenged. We are blessed that we can look to God's Word to find instruction, hope, and direction to ensure we are following God in our pursuits to build a proper foundation for our family. *"Foundations of the Family"* invites you and your family to dive into God's Word and look at the four foundations every family needs.

This book is not merely a theological study; we hope this can be a practical guide for families to have Gospel-centered conversations at home. We will explore how husbands can lovingly lead, wives can support with wisdom and grace, children can honor their parents while growing in Christlikeness, and parents can nurture and cultivate the growth of the next generation. Together, we will look at how these foundations extend beyond the walls of our homes, shaping our communities and the church itself.

LESSON 1:
**THE FOUNDATION OF
RESPECT AND
SUBMISSION**

PASTOR RYAN STORY



Aretha Franklin sang about it. Rodney Dangerfield made jokes about not getting any. Games ought to have it. For us today, every family should have a foundation in it. The "it" we are discussing is respect. Respect is our opening foundation because it provides a profound insight into how God designed the family. For every believer in Jesus, respect is more than just an action. Respect is the "it" that every family needs because respect is a reflection of love, humility, and submission.

1. Why do you think mutual respect is foundational to the strength of marriage and family?

I recently sat down with two young people as they are about to embark on the journey of marriage. Whenever someone asks if I would be willing to officiate, I request a few sit-downs with the soon-to-be-married couple to do premarital counseling. This is meant to serve as an opportunity to speak truth into their lives and ultimately point them to God's design for marriage. One of the more pointed conversations I like to have is discussing roles within the marriage. Far too often, we look to society as our measuring stick for how a marriage and family ought to run. From what I have come to learn, God designed families to have the foundations of respect and submission, and when they are not implemented early in a family, hardship is to come.

In Ephesians chapter 5, God's Word gives a final statement about marriage: "***However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband***" (Ephesians 5:33). God's instructions are clear. Husbands love your wives as explained earlier in the chapter, and wives respect your husbands as explained earlier in the chapter.

2. What advice would you give young people who are about to get married?

3. What is the worst advice a person could receive before they get married?

Many times whenever we think of respect we simply run to Ephesians 5:22-24 emphasis on submission. **"Wives, submit to your 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."**

While there is a great truth that submission is a major aspect of a wife's role, more is found in this chapter than a wife's submission. One cannot omit verses fifteen through twenty-one, with a major focus on verse twenty-one.

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."
Ephesians 5:15-21

Respect in our family must first stem from our submission to Christ as Lord. When a person surrenders their life to Jesus, confesses

Him as their Lord, and believes that He is the only way to be saved from the sin that rules our hearts, their heart will be transformed and changed. This change that only Jesus can bring will change how a person treats others. God's Word does not start with calling for only wives to submit. God's Word first calls believers to mutually submit to one another. This submission to Christ brings respect, which sets the tone for respect within marriage and family.

4. How does submitting to Christ shape the way we interact with our spouses and family members?

5. Should you submit to what you do not respect?

While there is a collective call to believers to submit to one another, there also is a direct call for wives to submit ***"to your husbands as to the Lord."*** Submission is not a dirty word, nor is it to be used as an authoritarian term to keep a person in line. Submission must be viewed not just as the duty of wives alone, but as an essential part of a Christian lifestyle. Jesus submitted to His parents, paid taxes, submitted to the will of the Father, and even said the Holy Spirit should be with His people. Jesus modeled submission. Submission is not meant to be something that must be earned, it is a call from the Word of God. We cannot pluck Ephesians 5:22-23 out of thin air without knowing the context of Ephesians 5:21, which says, ***"submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."*** A wife's submission to her husband is ***"as to the Lord"*** and demonstrates a reverence for Christ, rather than a chauvinistic political system. When a man and a woman are joined in marriage they are joined to reflect Christ to each other.

6. How has a worldly view of respect and submission perverted God's truth?

God's Word is the ultimate Truth. Too often, we try to add loopholes to His Word. These loopholes are used to make light of disobedience and sin. Living a life of righteous perfection has only been done by one person. For everyone else who is not Jesus, living for God is hard. The reality for wives is submission and respect can be hard. Inasmuch, husbands loving their wives, children honoring their parents, and parents building up their children, are all difficult if not impossible without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is why wives are instructed to "**submit to your husbands as to the Lord.**" Regardless of how a husband is, submission and respect are due because that act of obedience is given to the Lord.

7. How does loophole living erode the foundations of a marriage?

Paul (moreover, God's Word) emphasizes the importance of a wife's respect and submission toward their husbands. In Roman culture, a wife's role was to be a dignified wife and a good mother. A wife would be a matron who would make their clothes, provide for children (preferably boys), and make sure the home and food were both good. God's truth is so revolutionary. A wife would display worship and obedience to the one true God for the ways she would reflect the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This respect is not a sign of inferiority, but a demonstration of love and honor, a lifestyle of God's design for unity in the family, a glue that helps strengthen the marriage bond and a reflection of the realness of Jesus.

8. What practical ways can wives demonstrate respect for their husbands, and how does this align with biblical teachings?

9. How can husbands practically facilitate respect and submission in their wives, and encourage their obedience?

Aretha Franklin sang about it, “R-E-S-P-E-C-T.” Rodney Dangerfield made jokes about not getting any. Games ought to have it. For us today, every family should want respect and submission as a foundation.

NOTES

RESPECT

DEVOTION #1 - PASTOR MITCHELL HOLMES

"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

When I was a child, I remember playing games with my sisters. Our games would regularly be that of playing some kind of store. Whether we were selling potions we had made from mud and grass, or making our own fast food chain, we liked to play store. One thing that I was regularly obsessed with when we would play these games was who was in charge. In my mind, it was hard for me to have fun if I had to work for my baby sisters. Being in charge meant that I answered to no-one and what I said, WENT. Both of which were incredibly important to me. Not being in charge, to me, was worse than not playing at all.

Our passage for today addresses this subject within the infrastructure of marriage. Ephesians 5:22-24 reads, ***"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 everything to their husbands."*** Now at first glance, it can be easy to read this passage as telling husbands that they're in charge and wives are somehow inferior, but that is not what is being taught in this passage.

The concept of submission is not at all about inferiority, rather it's about God's design for marriage being one of equal, yet different

and distinct roles for a husband and a wife. Just as the Church submits to Christ for spiritual direction and care, a wife's respect for her husband is an act of trust in God's design. Paul writes in Verse 22 and says "**as to the Lord.**" This tells us that honoring one's husband is a reflection of the honor you have for the Lord. A wife's willingness to submit to her husband is indicative of her faith in God's design and a desire to be led in the same way that the church is led by Christ.

Verse 23 shows us that the husband's role is "**the head**" and he should be a reflection of Christ as the leader of the church. This means that it is a husband's job to represent the style of sacrificial, servant-leadership that is so present in Christ's character. It is not his role to be domineering or controlling. Ultimately, it is his responsibility to take into account the voice of his wife and hear her thoughts and opinions on difficult decisions before prayerfully making a decision for the home.

When a home is run by a man who lives to represent Christ in his leadership and a wife that respectfully trusts him, it creates an atmosphere where love and unity can flourish and allows the team that your marriage is, to be as successful as possible.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Memory Verse

Memorize the following verse, "**Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.**" Romans 12:10

WIVES SUBMIT TO THEIR HUSBANDS

DEVOTION #2 - KATIE PETTIBONE

"Wives, submit to your 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

When I think of the word “submission”, for some reason I also think of the word “devote.” To me, you cannot have one without the other. To be devoted to something means you have dedicated yourself to it. Now, when you dedicate yourself to something, say like keeping a job or finishing an assignment for school to get a good grade, you have to submit to it. Like with a job or class, you have to follow certain rules and regulations that are set in place so you get the job or assignment done successfully. If you don't follow these rules and instructions, then you are setting yourself up for failure. You could lose your job or get a bad grade. This is why we need to submit, because when we do, we will see the blessing God has planned for us.

In “*Disciplines of a Godly Woman*” by Barbara Hughes, she writes all about submission being the way to blessing. “All believers, men and women, are called to willingly and cheerfully submit to what we know and trust about God - that he wants us to live a life of blessing. That life of blessing is found in submitting to God's loving rule and God's order in this world. So submission is the path to blessing.” I love the way this is worded because it puts into perspective the beauty of submission. Wives are supposed to submit to their husbands, that is a fact. When you married him, you devoted yourself to him, therefore you are to submit to him. But first and foremost, God should be the

treasure of the household.

The family should look to the Lord and devote themselves to the one who gave them the blessing of family in the first place. We cannot live a righteous life without God being at the head and center of it.

So wives and children, and husbands (yes I am talking to you, too), look inwardly in your heart. Have you devoted yourself to the Lord? If you have done so, have you submitted your life to Him? In Matthew 6:21 Jesus says, ***“Where your treasure is - there your heart will be also.”*** Take a look at what you have been submitting to recently and if it has not been the Lord, that means you have been treasuring other things. Take the time to pray and be with the Lord as a family today and get back on track if you need to.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Pray

Opening Family Prayer:

Dear Lord,

Thank you for all you have done for us. We are grateful that you have taken our debt and freely paid it. Your grace is sufficient. Please help us to submit to you Lord, as you are our Lord and Savior. Please be our strength when we feel weak and help us fight against evil temptation. As you are the head of our household, help us to put you first, and each other second. As we serve you, help us to follow your plans for us. We are so grateful to you Lord and we praise you.

In Jesus name, Amen.

Prayer Activity Options:

- Have each person write or share a prayer request, then have each person pray over the one next to them.
- Have each person write their name and a prayer request on a piece of paper and put the names in a pile. Randomly choose one of the requests *You cannot choose your own name.* The person you chose is the one you are assigned to pray over for the rest of the week.

SERVE EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD

DEVOTION #3 - ALYSSA FAIRSE

"Wives, submit to your 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

My husband, Brandon, and I had been married for four years, but our marriage was anything but healthy. It was broken, strained, and far from what God intended. We weren't honoring the Lord or each other, and by the end of those four years, I felt like I had nothing left to give. I moved out and filed for divorce, fully convinced that Brandon was to blame. I told my friends and family everything he had done wrong, and naturally, they stood by me. They saw him through the lens I had painted—one of frustration, hurt, and disappointment. But what I didn't tell them was the part I played. I left out how selfish I had become, how I tried to control everything, and how often I let pride lead the way.

The hard reality is that as wives, the desire to control is part of our fallen nature. In Genesis 3:16, God tells Eve after the fall, "**Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.**" This means that a wife would have a desire to dominate or control their husband. That verse pierced me when I finally saw it for what it was. God showed me that my controlling behavior was not a personality flaw; it was part of the curse of sin. For years, I had let the enemy win by giving in to that flesh-driven desire. I was not fighting for my marriage; I was fighting against it, all while convincing myself I was justified.

Healing began when I humbled myself before the Lord and allowed Him to show me the condition of my own heart. When I stopped blaming Brandon and started seeking God, everything began to shift. It was not easy, but it was the beginning of redemption. I finally surrendered to the Lord and began meeting weekly with a mentor. Together, we walked through the book, *“Created to Be His Help Meet”* by Debi Pearl. Those conversations and that book helped shift my entire perspective on marriage. Instead of dwelling on Brandon's flaws, I began to focus on who God created me to be as a wife.

As a result, Brandon and I started premarital counseling. Through our mentors, and our surrender, God truly took His rightful place at the center of our relationship where He always belonged, and we got remarried in March of 2020. What was once shattered was no longer just repaired; it was redeemed. God didn't just patch up the broken pieces, He created something new, something stronger, something rooted in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, ***“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*** Brandon and I are far from perfect, and there are still moments when control and pride try to creep back into my heart; but the Lord, in His grace and faithfulness, continues to remind me of His redeeming love and the importance of dying to myself daily. As Jesus said in Luke 9:23, ***“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”***

Today, there may be times in your marriage when loving or serving your husband feels difficult, maybe he let you down, forgot something important, or said something that hurt. In those moments, it is easy to withdraw or hold back, but the beautiful truth is this: when you choose to serve, love, and honor your husband—especially when it is hard—you are ultimately doing it for the Lord.

Colossians 3:23–24 reminds us, ***“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”***

Marriage is a reflection of Christ's love, and when we love selflessly, we are worshiping God with our actions. This doesn't mean ignoring hurt or avoiding healthy communication, but it does mean remembering who you're ultimately serving. Your faithfulness, even in the quiet, unseen moments, is an offering to Jesus, He sees you, knows your heart, and gives you strength to love in ways you couldn't on your own. ***"Let all that you do be done in love"*** (1 Corinthians 16:14).

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Read The Bible

As a family, read 1 Peter 3.

THE EXAMPLE

DEVOTION #4 - STEPHEN BILLINGS

"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

When I was growing up, I loved to play sports. In any free time I had, you could find me shooting hoops, playing baseball, or hitting golf balls in my backyard. I naturally enjoy playing sports. One of the reasons for this is because of my dad. My dad encouraged me to play sports and would join me whenever he could. A big part of the reason I played basketball in high school was because my father played.

However, in high school, I began to play for a coach whose leadership I quickly began to question. The coach and I didn't seem to get along. I always had great relationships with coaches in the past, but for some reason, I just did not like this one coach in particular. I found myself beginning to dislike playing basketball. I did not want to respect and follow the leader of my team, so I slowly lost interest in the game.

Ephesians chapter five presents a challenge to believers in Jesus Christ to ***"be imitators"*** (Ephesians 5:1) of their Creator. This means that we who choose to follow Jesus need to be striving to follow the example that Christ has left before us. One of the ways we are to do that is by walking in love (Ephesians 5:2). The author of the book of Ephesians (Paul), challenges both men and women to be imitators of Christ in their marriage relationships by asking

women to **"submit"** or respect their husbands leadership and for men to love their wife as Christ loved the church (live sacrificially unto the Lord).

As a kid and in high school, I wanted to play basketball because my father played. I wanted to be like my dad so I strived to do the things which he did. Christ desires for us to be like Him so we should strive to live like He did. This flows into each and every part of our lives, even our marriages. I will be honest, as a father of three wonderful children and husband to an amazing wife, my wife and I sometimes fail at our responsibilities of submitting (role of the wife) and loving as Christ loved the church (role of the husband).

As the leader in my home, it can be difficult to live sacrificially therefore not making it easy for my wife to respect my leadership within our home. Just as it was difficult for me to follow the leadership of my coach.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Encouragement

As we focus on the wife's role within the marriage relationship, I understand that respecting leadership is not always easy. However, Christ has laid out a perfect example for us in His life of living in obedience to His heavenly Father. While following Christ's example or the leadership of one's husband may not be easy, there is love, grace, and compassion that can be found in the cross of Jesus Christ who died so that our shortcomings could be forgiven, and eternal life with Christ secured if we choose to declare Jesus to be our Lord.

A CHALLENGE TO WIVES

DEVOTION #5 - JASMYN BICKNELL

"Wives, submit to your 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

In marriage, we are to be the mirror image of the relationship Christ has with the church. Wives represent the church, while husbands represent Christ. This may confuse you, and you may not know where to start, so let's break it down.

A marriage should be based on a few key principles. First, obviously, being that the Lord is our foundation, and from there comes love, submission, trust, respect, and devotion for each other. Wives should have a deep admiration and affection, trusting their leadership, never doubting your spouse, and always seeking to better themselves as well as each other. These qualities do not come naturally, and because of our selfish human nature, we have to constantly fight our flesh and rely on the Lord to give us everything we need to be a good spouse.

The big challenge that Paul gives to wives here, and probably one of the biggest struggles we have in marriage, is simple to understand but difficult to execute. He is instructing wives to submit... to everything. If you're like me, you can be stubborn at times and want to be in control, but the reality is that you should trust that your husband is going to lead your family towards Christ. Sometimes, this means you are going to have absolutely no idea where you're going until you get there. That can be scary, but we are not meant to

know everything, that is the Lord's job.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Challenge

Wives, for the upcoming week, I challenge you to seek out ways to submit to your husband. Try to think of specific times or ways that you struggle with this and say a prayer every morning asking the Lord to help you fight against your flesh. It won't always be the easiest, especially on the days that you're feeling overwhelmed and short-tempered, but that is when you call on the name of the Lord and ask for His help. This is a command in the Bible, and though we may not want to follow it at times, we must do it. We must be careful not to simply pick and choose only the Scriptures we think are easy to follow, we must consider the Bible as a whole.

Husbands, this is an opportunity for you to come alongside your wife, encourage her, and pray together. So, as we close today, think of two ways that your wife has been successful in submitting to you this week and share those with her. Wives, take notes, and use these examples to help you in the coming weeks.

SUBMISSION

DEVOTION #6 - PASTOR RYAN STORY

When I hear the word “submit” or “submission” my mind drifts to the wrestling world. In wrestling opponents are faced against one another until they are capable of forcing the other into submission, or a state of giving up. In this scenario neither opponent desires to be the one that has to submit, the goal is to conquer or win!

Ephesians 5:22-24 writes, ***“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.”***

I believe the idea of submitting is one that can be very difficult for us to understand. As with the wrestling example, submission is not something that humans often strive for. Especially if one has the drive to become a strong, independent person, the “anything you can do, I can do better” type of person, the idea of submitting, let alone the actual act of submitting, becomes something to be avoided. People often spend their time searching for reasons why they should not have to submit, or loopholes to what this verse is saying instead of pressing into what Paul really meant when he wrote this. We fail to ask what this biblical command for wives to submit to their husband might actually mean.

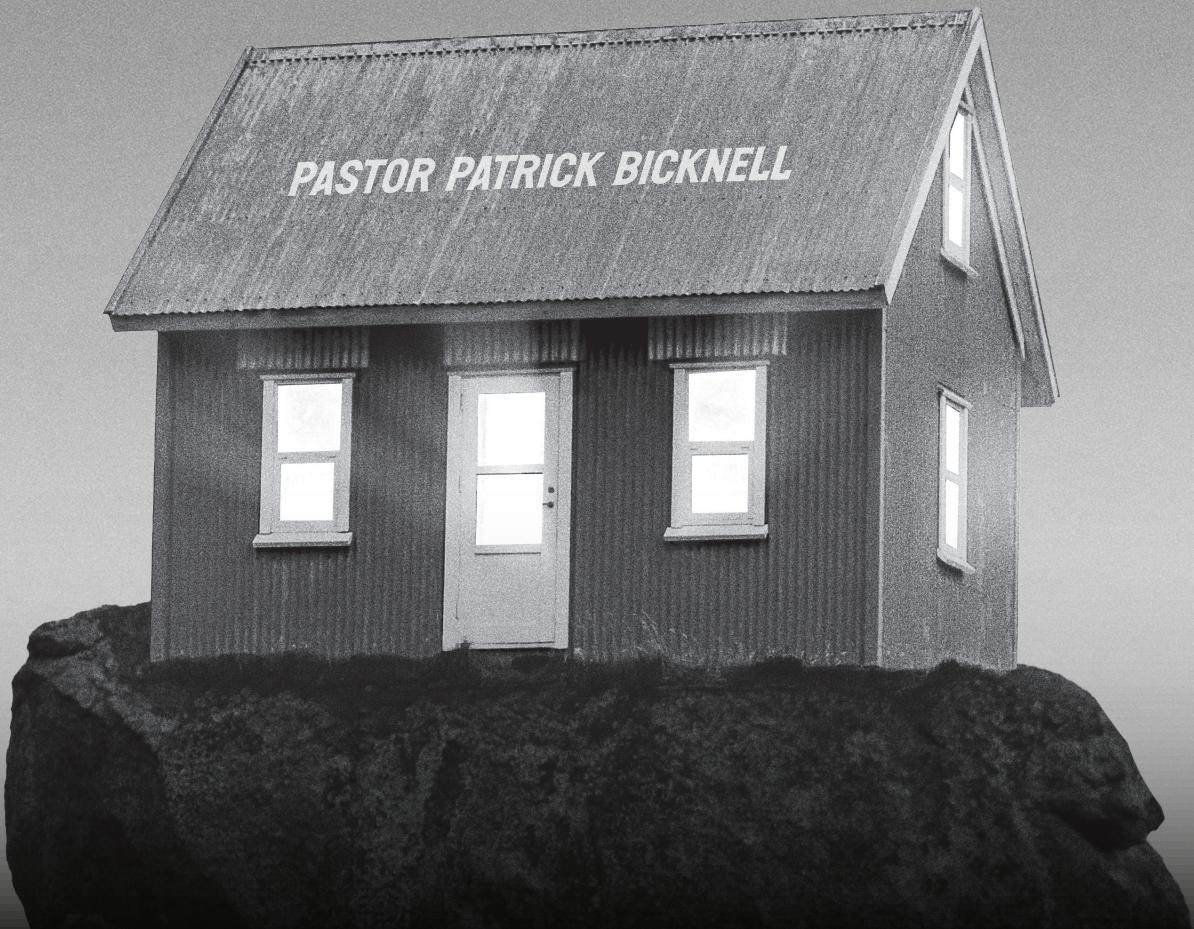
Unlike the wrestling submission, where someone has to be forced to submit before the match ends, this biblical form of submission is a willful submission. Throughout Ephesians 5 Paul has written about imitating Christ. Ephesians 5:1-2 says, ***“Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loves us and***

gave himself up for us." Just as Jesus willingly gave up his life to save us, we willingly submit out of imitation of Christ. Just as a wife willingly enters into union with her husband, we now willingly submit to the order God has given us with the husband as the head of the marriage. We joyfully and willfully obey this command not to make life easier for the husband, but to obey what God has said and to live in obedience to Him.

If you have found yourself viewing submission to your husband, or even submission to God, as more of a wrestling match, one where you feel determined to win; ask God to reveal areas of your heart and mind that need to be submitted to Him. Trust in the order and plan that God has designed.

LESSON 2:
THE FOUNDATION
OF LOVE

PASTOR PATRICK BICKNELL



As we move through family month at The River Church and talk about the roles within the family, this can be a very sensitive topic for many people. The idea that the husband is the head of the household and the wife is supposed to submit to the husband's leadership can cause an immediate backlash. This could be due to many factors, but I believe the most prominent one would be the long history of husbands abusing their leadership role in the family. It's not something that is unique to our time, this has been a struggle forever. I've read before about how ancient texts used to describe that husbands were urged to rule over or be domineering towards their wives. That is typically what people think of when they hear that the husband is supposed to be the head of the household. Husbands failing to fulfill their role in the way God intended them to has unfortunately caused our world to move away from the biblical commands for a husband and follow a more secular, progressive view of marriage.

However, I hope that as we study the foundations of the family, we see truly how a husband is supposed to lead. His leadership and headship over the family are not meant to be used to abuse his wife, but rather are meant to reflect the love that Christ has for the church.

1. What are some struggles you have with the idea that the husband is the head of the marriage/household?

2. What are some struggles the world has with that view of marriage?

Now that we addressed the elephant in the room, I want us to look at what is the foundation for how the husband is meant to lead his wife and his family. Put very simply the foundation is love, and

more specifically it is the love of Christ. This is essential for us to understand. If we don't grasp this understanding then we miss the point completely of how a husband is supposed to lead, and as husbands, we will fail in what God is calling us to do. There are many ways that husbands are meant to follow the example of Christ's love, but I want to look at just two of them in this lesson.

Let's look at the first way Paul says husbands are supposed to follow the example of Christ's love for the church. "***Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her***" (Ephesians 5:25). The first example the husband is supposed to follow is how Christ gave Himself up for the church. This is the first and foremost thing that husbands are meant to follow. Christ stepped down from glory and came to earth so that He could serve rather than be served. He came to die for sinners who don't deserve it precisely because He loved us so much. In the same way, husbands are meant to reflect this love for their wives.

This sort of love is self-sacrificial, it counts the other person's needs before our own, and it shows that the husband is meant to use his leadership not for his gain but rather for the betterment of his wife.

3. What are some ways a husband can show this sort of love to his wife?

4. How might your marriage benefit from loving your wife this way?

5. Does trying to live up to the standard of Christ (perfection) discourage you in any way?

The second way I want to look at comes a few verses later. *"In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. 'For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."*

Ephesians 5:28-33

The important thing to see here is that in the same way that Christ cares for the church, and we care for our own body, we need to care for our wife as well. This is again coming back to the self-sacrificial love that Christ showed for us. Not only that, but when we enter into the marriage covenant we see that God says the two shall become one flesh. This is the purpose of marriage. It is meant to give us a glimpse of what our union with Christ is like.

6. What are some of the implications of the husband and wife becoming one flesh?

7. How has knowing that you have become "one flesh" with your spouse helped you in your marriage?

8. Why is it important to view loving your wife as loving yourself?

9. What should viewing marriage as a representation of Christ and the church motivate you to do?

Now, I'm sure that reading about how we are to follow the example of Christ in our marriage can make us feel terrible about the ways we are currently falling short. That is okay, we are all going to make mistakes and constantly fail. We are not meant to be perfect like Christ because we can't. We are meant to follow His example as best as we can through the power of the Holy Spirit.

10. What are some ways you, as the husband, need to change the way you love your wife this week?

11. Wives, what are some ways that your husband is following the example of Christ in your marriage? Share those with him.

We need to remember what the true foundation of our roles as husbands is. If we start to change the way we lead to loving like Christ we will see our marriages and families thrive in ways we have never seen before. Let us seek to lead the way Christ led, love

the way Christ loves, and so build our family on the foundation of Christ's example and bring glory and honor to His name.

NOTES

JUST AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH

DEVOTION #1 - CHRIS MONTVILLE

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25-27

Do you ever feel a weight for something that you will have to answer for? If you are in school and you did not do your homework, when the homework is due, there is a weight that should set in. You know that you are going to be held accountable for not completing it. If you are working, when you have a deadline approaching and you are not on pace to meet that deadline, you feel that weight.

One day, we will all be held accountable for our actions. Thankfully, through the payment Jesus paid on the cross, we will not stand condemned as guilty for falling short of God's perfect standard. However, the Bible is still pretty clear that our actions will be judged to some extent (2 Corinthians 5:10).

When I began attending The River Church, at our Waterford location, I joined the Young Adult ministry. At the time, it was being run by a man who is now a deacon. I remember several times this man would tell us, "I will be responsible to God for my treatment of my wife." He wanted the next generation to know this, and he was making the same point in this passage from Ephesians chapter 5: *"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her"* (Ephesians 5:25).

Our culture does not hold marriage to the standard that Christians should. Men, we are called to love our wives just as Christ loved the church. The same way Christ sacrificed His life on the cross for the church, is the same type of love that we are meant to show our wives. That's a lot of love! ***"So that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish"*** Ephesians 5:27.

Husbands, how often are we helping our wives strive to be holy and without blemish? Please hear me: this does not mean to hold them to an unrealistic "perfect" standard, but rather, to cultivate a space where they can grow in their relationship with the Lord, and encourage their spiritual growth. Is that a priority for us? The call for the husband to love his wife self-sacrificially as Christ did for the church is a big, serious, and daunting task. However, it is one that we cannot avoid. We must set that example for not only our wives, but also for our children so that the next generation can see what a Christ-centered marriage truly looks like.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Memory Verse

Memorize the following verse, ***"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."*** Ephesians 5:25

NOT ALWAYS RIGHT

DEVOTION #2 - JUSTIN FOROOZAN

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25-27

I'm really bad at sitting still. When I get home after a long day of work, the last thing I want to do is sit on the couch and do nothing. Usually, I'll do some chores, work on a home renovation, or go to the garage and tinker on something. My wife knows this, and in her love and wisdom, she has warned me again and again to "change my clothes" before going into the garage. Unfortunately, I don't always heed her warning. It was not until Sunday morning when I was looking for my nice clothes for church, that I realized all my clothes were stained! My wife very lovingly looked at me and said those dreaded words, "Told ya so."

There is a verse in Proverbs that says, "***The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice***" (Proverbs 12:15). When I read this verse, the first thing that comes into my mind is, "Well, of course!" However, more recently I've started to see that this is something I should apply more often, not just at work or in a hobby, but even more with my marriage. I tend to fall into the trap of thinking I know better than I do. For me, it is usually caused by a fear of thinking I need to have everything figured out, or by my arrogance of thinking I do have everything figured out. Either way, it is on me when I become the fool who is right in my own eyes.

The book of Genesis tells us, “***Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh***” (Genesis 2:24). When we become one flesh with our wives, they are also becoming one flesh with us. It’s easy to think that we know better, but we must remember that our spouse knows us better than any other person. We can’t agree with the proverb when it tells us “***a wise man listens to advice,***” then reject the advice we receive from the person who knows the most about us! Listening to our wives means heeding their warnings instead of ending up with oil-stained pants at a Sunday gathering. It means we are not always right!

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Guided Prayer

Lord, thank you for all that you do. Thank you for your mercy and guidance as we traverse this world. I pray that I humble myself before you and before my family. I pray that I am not clouded with doubt, fear, or arrogance when offered advice. And I pray that you use my wife to speak into my life. In Jesus name, Amen.

DIVINE BLUEPRINT

DEVOTION #3 - MARK PITTENGER

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25-27

When God created all of life, He had the perfect plan and design for the family to reflect His glory and love. At the heart of this divine structure lies a sacred foundation: selfless love, sacrificial leadership, and mutual respect. Ephesians 5:25-33 offers a divine blueprint for how families are to function, beginning with the relationship between husband and wife. Verse 25 reads, ***"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."*** In this passage, the apostle Paul challenges husbands to love their wives in the same way that Christ loves the Church; with a love that is unconditional, sacrificial, and holy. This kind of love isn't rooted in emotions or convenience but in commitment and covenant. Christ gave everything—His comfort, His rights, even His life—for the sake of His bride. Husbands are called to do the same, laying down pride and selfish ambition to elevate and protect their wives.

This sets a powerful tone for the entire family structure. When a husband models Christ's love, it creates an atmosphere of safety, unity, and grace in the home. This show of love inspires respect and nurtures trust, both of which are essential for a thriving family. It doesn't demand submission but rather invites it through servant leadership.

In verse 29, Paul explains that just as Christ nourishes and cares for the Church, husbands should care for their wives as their own body. The metaphor used here emphasizes the oneness that marriage is meant to reflect. In God's divine design, marriage isn't merely a partnership, it is a union. What affects one affects the other. As each spouse lives not for self, but for the good of the other, love becomes the unshakable foundation of the home. However, this passage isn't simply a message to husbands. It reveals the deeper purpose behind God's design for a family, to mirror the relationship between Christ and the Church. The family becomes a living testimony of the Gospel. When love is sacrificial, submission is willing, and each member serves the other, the family then becomes a beacon of hope and truth in a broken world.

Children who grow up in such a home learn the character of God, not just through Sunday's lessons, but through the daily example of their parents' love. They see patience in discipline, grace in forgiveness, and strength in unity. The foundation of God's design for family teaches them what it means to love and be loved by God. In a culture that has distorted and devalued family, we are called back to the foundational truth of God's Word. Ephesians 5:25-33 is more than marriage advice, it is a divine strategy to build strong, faithful families that honor Christ.

So, ask yourself this, does the love of your family reflect the selfless love of Jesus? How can you better demonstrate God's design in your home?

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Read The Bible

As a family, read and discuss the following scriptures:

- Ephesians 5:25-33
- Ephesians 6:1-4
- Proverbs 22:6.

How are these passages related? What do they mean for your family? What do you need to change to ensure you're following God's divine blueprint?

BUILDING WITH LOVE

DEVOTION #4 - KARSEN THEEDE

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25-27

If LEGO or Lincoln Logs taught me anything as a kid, they taught me the importance of a good foundation. I remember trying to build massive towers just to have them fall over because I thought one LEGO brick could hold up a tower as tall as 5-year-old me. Now, with a couple more years under my belt, I have graduated from LEGO and have helped to build real houses; yet, this principle of a good foundation hasn't changed. The majority of building a new house is the planning and construction of the foundation because you can't move until the foundation is solid. However, a good foundation doesn't just apply to houses. Men and husbands, God asks us to be the ones to build a foundation in our families that will last generations.

So, where do we start with this foundation? The first four words of Ephesians 5:25 sum it up pretty well, ***"Husbands, love your wives."*** Love should be the foundation of all relationships, including most importantly, our families. We tend to use the word love a little too flippantly. For example, I love sports, and I have favorite sports teams that I watch, but my love for them can very easily change based on their performance on any given day. This isn't the love that I'm talking about.

Earlier, I intentionally left out a chunk of Ephesians 5:25 relating to the kind of love I'm speaking of, it states, "***Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.***" The love that our family should be built on is the love that Jesus has for us. Jesus' love for us is pure, unwavering, and unconditional. He loves everyone, no matter what we have done, and he loves us so much that he died on the cross so we can be set free from our sins. Romans 5:8 says, "***But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***" This is not just love through words, but is shown through sacrifice and actions.

As husbands, we sacrifice our lives in order to hold fast to our wives, and we sacrifice our time and energy investing in our new family. As husbands, our families should be built on this kind of love that Christ gives to us as a reflection of His sacrifice. This love also teaches our children and family how to love others, which is an essential role that we have. In the same way that Jesus loves the church, we are to love our wives. Ephesians 5:28 says: "***In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.***"

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Encouragement

I encourage husbands reading this to take a moment and think about the foundation that you have built for your family. Has it become a routine or is it intentional and sacrificial love like the one that Jesus exemplifies?

HUSBANDS LOVE

DEVOTION #5 - ELIJAH EDWARDS

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25-27

Before we get into the passage today, I have a question. How did Jesus love the church? In other words, how did Jesus show His love to the church? Spend a moment thinking of ways that Jesus loved the church and how He showed that love.

We read in Ephesians 5:25, ***"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."*** What is the first thing that is commanded for husbands in this verse? How did Christ love the church? He ***"gave himself up for her."*** Jesus gave up His life for the church so that we can have eternal life through Him if we confess and believe. In this verse, Paul states that husbands are to love their wives in this same way. This sacrificial love is where Jesus laid down His life for us.

"That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'Therefore a man

shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that." Ephesians 5:26-33

After reading this, what does a husband's love look like? This love is so important for a family's foundation because through God's command for husbands, a love that is sacrificial, humble, and committed grounds the family to grow and be more like Jesus. Husbands love their wives as Christ laid His life down.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Challenge

Husbands, what are some ways you can show this love to your wife today? Spend time thinking of ways you can show love to her today and then go do it!

Wives, what are ways that your husband shows you this love? Write these things down and talk with him about them.

Parents, combine the two challenges and make time for your children to openly see this love occur.

Kids, how have you seen Dad love Mom like Jesus loves us? Take time to write it down and tell your parents how you see it each day.

HUSBANDS

DEVOTION #6 - PASTOR RYAN STORY

There are few areas in my life that revealed my need for Jesus, His grace, His wisdom, and His overall lordship in my life, more than being a husband. I always chuckle to myself whenever I read the book of Ephesians and I see how much more God's word directs attention to men. Ironically, I struggle with the notion that God did that unintentionally.

Every husband ought to discuss the importance of being a godly husband. The more I travel around the sun, each year I realize that sometimes the biggest frustrations I have inside of my marriage are not because of my wife, but actually because of me. I've noticed recently that I am so quick to blame work, parenting, misaligned priorities as the reason why I am not leading and loving my wife in the ***"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her"*** (Ephesians 5:25).

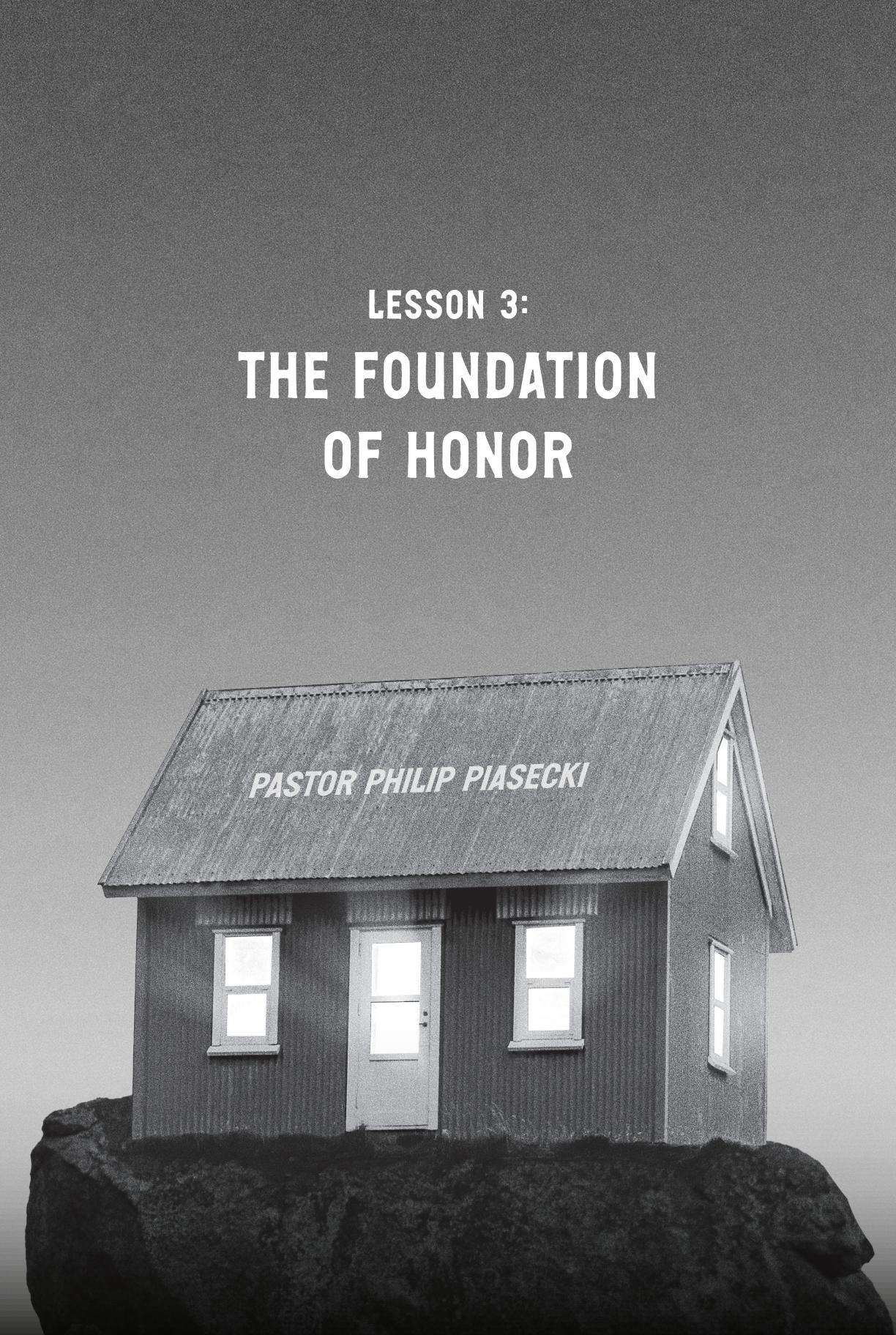
I recently read that when a young boy struggles in life they resort to blaming, avoiding and denying. As a man grows, one, two, or all three can be the way that a man handles frustrations, difficulties, or let downs. I bet we can all admit that there are times when one of those three heads rears itself in our marriages. It's easy to criticize husbands, but I want to encourage every husband reading this. Guys, we are built for challenges.

While marriage is worth fighting for, the ultimate challenge for any husband is relentlessly growing his personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God's Word in Ephesians clearly states that husbands are called to love their wives like Christ loved the church. This is a divine order. How can you genuinely reflect the real relationship you have

with Jesus and Christ's character and love in your marriage if you barely know Him? How can His Word guide you if it is unfamiliar?

Your ability to love, lead, and serve your wife like Christ directly depends on the depth of your walk with Him. Husbands if you wanna have a marriage that is growing, thriving, and brings glory to God, I challenge you this week to be quick to return yourself to Him who loves you.

LESSON 3:
THE FOUNDATION
OF HONOR



PASTOR PHILIP PIASECKI

When I was growing up, my family built a house on a lake. The only problem was under the sandy soil the foundation was not sturdy enough to support a house. So, what you do is install these things called "pilings". They are huge 25-foot-long wooden telephone pole-looking things that get driven into the ground by a giant machine. The idea is that you pound enough of these in for the house to sit on them, and boom! You have a sturdy foundation to build upon. When they were installing the pilings at my childhood home, the crane operator forgot one essential thing, he didn't put all of the supports for the machine down properly. While trying to give our house a proper foundation, he didn't give his machine the proper foundation. After a short time, the giant crane tipped over and crushed the garage of my parent's neighbor. It was not the type of introduction my parents were hoping for!

1. Have you ever created or built something that didn't turn out as planned or failed in some way?

2. What happened?

We know when things aren't put together right, they tend to fail. It's obvious to see this in physical structures, it can be harder to see within a structure like the family. When the family structure doesn't have the proper foundation, it is going to fail. We've talked about how the family should be built on respect and love between husbands and wives, and ultimately, between all the family members.

Now we are going to look at how honor, particularly from the child to the parents, contributes to strengthening the family foundations. I know that someone in middle school all the way to someone whose parents have long since passed away could be studying this lesson,

so regardless of your situation, try and see how the relationship between child and parent currently applies to you. It may be something you need to learn to put into practice in your life right now or something you can use to help disciple someone. Regardless of your situation, let the Word of God speak to you.

3. How have you been challenged in your understanding of the family foundations through the last two weeks of lessons?

Ephesians 6:1-3 says, ***“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.”***

4. What does it mean for children to obey their parents ***“in the Lord”?***

5. How does this obedience reflect their relationship with God?

Sometimes the Bible can be confusing, other times it literally cannot be any more straightforward. The command here is clear, ***“Children obey their parents in the Lord.”*** Our obedience, respect, and honor towards our parents is an extension of our relationship with Christ. The expectation here is that the children being spoken to know Jesus as their savior and stay in obedience to the Word of the Lord. They are commanded to obey their parents.

We demonstrate our submission to Jesus' order and authority when we obey our parents. Let's be honest, as a child, it isn't always easy to obey our parents. There are many excuses we can come up with why it would be better for us to ignore their commands. However, we show our trust in Jesus that His ways are higher than our own when we obey even when it is not easy.

6. What do you see as the difference between "obeying" and "honoring" your father and mother?

The word honor means to "show high regard for". This is an internal feeling, not just an outward response. It's easy just to obey someone, and do it all while having a horrible attitude. To honor our parents we must have an internal genuine respect for them, this feeling towards them then will reveal itself in the way we interact with them and how we speak about them to others. I know some of you reading this right now might be thinking "If you only knew my parents, you wouldn't expect me to honor them."

7. How can you do a better job of honoring your father and mother?

8. What do you think the verse means when it says, "***That it may go well with you and you may live long in the land***"?

Very simply and practically, obeying your parents is going to keep you safe. Think of this part of the verse almost as a Proverb.

Logically, if my parents tell me to wear a seatbelt and I listen to them when I get in a car accident, I'm more likely to be safe. A good Godly parent lays out rules and expectations for a child ultimately for their good. As a child, you are not always going to like what your parents tell you to do, but obedience can lead to well-being and good health as a result. A God-fearing Christian community that builds its foundation on honoring and obeying one another is going to create an environment that helps things "*go well with you*" as the Scripture says.

9. Has there ever been a time that you didn't obey a parent and it almost led you to getting seriously hurt?

I understand that every person's situation is different. God knew that every child was not going to have the perfect parent, yet He still put this commandment in Scripture. So, how do we handle obeying and honoring parents in bad situations as well as good ones? If you had a bad upbringing, know that your heavenly Father loves and cares for you. He sent His son to die for you, Jesus was willing to sacrifice everything for you. That is the true picture of what love is, and it is the witness that we can show our parents by honoring them. If you have parents who are not believers, you as a Christian have an incredible opportunity to show them Jesus.

However, as believers, we have to remember that God is our ultimate authority. Acts 5:29 says, "**But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'**" There may be times when you will have to follow God's commands over the command of a parent. This cannot be based on your opinion, but it would have to be something that is clearly against the commands of Scripture. The world believes we are to give honor only to those who have earned it, but Scripture calls us to honor our parents regardless.

10. How can you show honor to a parent that you feel has not earned that honor?

11. Ephesians 5:21 says we need to be, “***submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.***” How does this principle of mutual submission apply within the family structure?

When the parent/child relationship has a foundation of honor and respect, we will see our families flourish. This will flow out of a growing relationship with Christ. The more we understand Christ’s love for us, the more willingly we will submit to one another. My prayer is that families can learn to better understand the structure that God has put in place, and how that can lead to a happier, healthier family life. When children obey and honor their parents, and then parents in turn can show honor and respect back to their children, the family begins to reflect Christ. The foundation of the family is built on respect, love, and honor between each person. Children, no matter how young or how old, honor their parents.

12. What practical steps can your family take this week to cultivate an atmosphere of honor and respect in the home?

NOTES

A FAMILY BUILT ON THE WORD

DEVOTION #1 - MARC-E DELCAMP

As a kid, I remember (on more than one occasion) my parents asking me to do something before they left for the store. They'd always say, "Have it done by the time we get home." And every time, I'd think to myself, "Cool, I've got like two hours to do this two-minute job." Well, sure enough, those two hours would fly by and without fail, I'd hear the tires crunching up the driveway. At that moment, I had two options: either scramble to get it done as fast as I could, or accept my fate and take the discipline that was inevitably coming.

This leads us right into our verses for the week: "***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 6:1-3.

If I had obeyed Scripture as a kid, I would have saved myself and my parents a lot of frustration. But like all kids, I was not perfect, not even close. It's important to notice the phrasing Paul uses here, "***Children, obey your parents in the Lord.***" Paul isn't just talking to kids, he's talking to parents, too. He instructs children to obey, but he also implies a responsibility for parents to raise their children in the Lord.

This ties directly into the next part, "***Honor your father and mother.***" Kids, the greatest way to honor your parents is to obey them. Parents, the greatest way to be honorable is to raise your children in the Lord. So, how do we start doing this?

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Memory Verse

Parents: Take 10 minutes every day this week to sit down and memorize a verse from the Bible with your children. A great place to start is John 3:16, ***"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."***

Kids: Be excited to memorize scripture with your parents or even get ahead of the game and memorize scripture on your own. Small steps like this will build habits that shape the spiritual foundation of your family. Let's build together!

IT IS RIGHT

DEVOTION #2 - GRANT GRIMES

"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." Ephesians 6:1–3

As a child, one of the hardest things for us to do is honor our parents. Especially for those of us who took childhood as an opportunity to test our parents' patience and become the kind of example other parents use to warn their kids, "Don't be like them." Even though that's how many of us feel, the truth remains: every child has a God-given command to honor their parents.

For many, this is a hard reality to face. The idea of purposefully giving your parents a place of authority in your life might even sound sickening, especially if your relationship with them was strained or painful, but that was never God's intent for this relationship. God, as our heavenly Father, designed the parent-child relationship to be a reflection of the relationship we're meant to have with Him. A relationship built on dependence and submission, rooted in the idea that the one in authority has the best interest of the other at heart.

Growing up, I was fortunate to experience a relationship with my parents that resembled what God intended. Now, it was not perfect—no relationship is—but it gave me a foundation. And as we're talking about this month, that foundation helped me to see who God was. I believe it even led me to understand the kind of relationship God wants to have with me. This should be the goal of every parent-child relationship: The parent loves and leads in a way that makes them easy to honor. The child submits and obeys, not just because Paul

says it's the right thing to do, but because they understand their parent has their best interest at heart.

When we face the opportunity to honor our parents, instead of grumbling and wondering how we are supposed to do this, we can look at God's design. We are intended to honor. When we honor our parents, we ultimately honor the Lord and fulfill God's design for parents and children.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Guided Prayer

Lord, help me to honor and love You the way You designed me too. Instead of grumbling or going my own way, help me to submit to You first and follow through by submitting to my parents. Lord, I ask that You make my parents easier to honor each day and make submitting better for me each time. Lord, thank You for giving us the example of honor and submission. I love You and thank You for always being with me. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

LISTENING TO INSTRUCTION

DEVOTION #3 - PASTOR PATRICK BICKNELL

"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.'" Ephesians 6:1-3

There is a moment that I remember very vividly of a time when I was at my parent's house with my son who was about 4 at the time. We were all hanging out for a family dinner, and it was one of those days when my son was deciding that he knew better than me and didn't want to listen at all. I was starting to get very frustrated. I looked over to my dad and said, "I don't understand. Why won't he listen to me?" I will never forget how my dad responded. He chuckled, looked at me, and said, "Welcome to the club." It doesn't matter if you are a boy or girl, how old you are, or how good your relationship is with your parents, at one point or another you are most likely not going to listen to your parents. If you are like me, unfortunately, it is going to take you longer than you should to learn the lesson that you need to listen to your parent's instructions.

One of the best things as parents that we can do for our children is to teach them the ways of following the Lord, and one of the best things that children can do is to listen and learn from their parents.

I love this verse in Proverbs that says, *"A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke"* (Proverbs 13:1). None of us are perfect when it comes to living out these truths. Parents can always be better at instructing their children, and children can always be better at listening to that instruction. However, I want to encourage you for a minute. The fact

that you are reading this together, right now, proves that you are trying and that you desire to follow the Lord. It is a beautiful thing to learn from our parents the truths that God has revealed to them. There is no better person in our lives to teach us how to follow than our parents. We see them at their best and their worst. We see them in mountaintops and valleys.

Parents, I know that can be a little frightening, but don't worry. Although we fail many times, the Lord is faithful and strong to help us in our weaknesses. Children, know that your parents will fail to live up to the standard of Christ just as you will to your children one day. However, that does not give us an excuse to not follow our parent's instructions. Let's all strive to live out what Paul said in 1 Corinthians, ***"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ"*** (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Read The Bible

Read this passage as a family and discuss your thoughts on it. ***"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and your gates."***

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

FATAL CURIOSITY

DEVOTION #4 - ZACH HONNEN

"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." Ephesians 6:1–3

Growing up, I'm not gonna lie, I didn't like to just go with the flow. Even now, I still find it to be a challenge. I've always had this need to know the "why" behind everything. Whether you want me to stop or start a project, meet for coffee, or just give you a call, my instinct is always to ask, "Why?"

I call this my fatal asset. In one sense, curiosity is a strength, but in another, it can make me come across as abrasive, stubborn, or even prideful, especially when trust is what's needed. This fatal asset was not exactly appreciated by my old foreman. His go-to phrase (which matched my parents') still rings in my ears, "Because I said so!"

Now, there are things in life that don't need a "why." But thankfully, for those of us who suffer from fatal curiosity, God doesn't just say, "Because I said so." He says, "Because I love you."

So, why must children ***"obey their parents"***? Why must we ***"honor our father and mother"***? Because it is right. James 4:17 says, ***"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."*** Because it is best for us. Romans 8:28 reads, ***"And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."***

When we obey and honor our parents, it leads to what's best for

us. Whether we've had good parents or bad ones, showing respect is healing for us. A pattern I've seen in many people is that when a parent is gone, whether they were loving or difficult, there's often regret about how the relationship ended, regret over final words, lost time, or silence. We honor not for their sake alone, but for God's sake and our own.

Let's close with a story: A man once took in his elderly parents to care for them, but as they aged, they became messy, forgetful, and clumsy. Frustrated, the man began treating them harshly. He would snap at them when they spilled food or made a mess. Eventually, he gave them plastic plates and utensils—cheap, disposable, and childish—so he wouldn't have to worry about broken dishes. One evening, he noticed his young son rummaging through the trash, pulling out the used plastic utensils and plates. Confused, the father asked, "Why are you doing that?" The boy replied, "I'm saving them...so I can use them for you when you're old." The moral of the story is that honor is passed down from generation to generation. Jesus reminds us to treat others the way we want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Encouragement

Take time today to encourage your family to obey and honor.

For Parents: "Hey kids, let's surprise Grandma and Grandpa with a phone call and let them know how much we love them! Even though adults don't obey the way kids do, we're still called to honor our parents."

For Kids: "Mom and Dad, I want to finish my chores and homework like you asked because I know that by obeying you, I'm honoring God and becoming a better kid."

HONOR CHILD

DEVOTION #5 - ELIJAH EDWARDS

When I was a kid there were two words that I dreaded when my mother told me to clean my room: spick and span. Regardless of what they meant, (I still don't believe they are real words to this day) I knew that the room had to be spotless. I hated doing that. What are some chores that you hate doing? (Parents, this is a good time to tell your kids what chores you dislike doing at home now, as well as when you were a kid.) Why do you hate doing these chores?

"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." Ephesians 6:1–3

I know that any kid in the room just made the biggest groan in the world. The child inside of all of us probably did the same thing. This command can seem very difficult. Whether we are a child, or an adult who had a difficult childhood, this isn't easy. What is Paul getting at here; why is it important for children to obey? Why is obedience important in a family?

Read the first verse again: ***"Obey your parents in the Lord."*** This isn't just a command for kids to listen to whatever their parents say and be ok with it; this is a command for children to be obedient to God. In Christ-centered families, it is important for children to obey their parents because it shows their obedience to God. (Sorry parents, God has more authority than you do!) Children have an amazing ability and opportunity to show the love of Jesus in their family by honoring their father and mother. This is such an important foundation because, through a child's obedience, they are showing

their commitment and love for the Lord to the family. In some families, this can be hard which is why I want to give a challenge for today.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Challenge

Parents, when giving a chore or command to your child I want you to think about why you are giving that command first. Do you want them to follow it so that they respect you? Or do you want them to follow it so that they respect God? Openly communicate that to your kids today.

Children, spend some time writing down some of the things you don't like doing and talk to your parents about them. This isn't an excuse or chance to get out of chores but it is a time for you to see how you can honor God by honoring your parent's wishes.

CHILDREN - OBEY

DEVOTION #6 - PASTOR RYAN STORY

The last season of my life was a very eventful one. I had the opportunity to lead a middle school Growth Community for the first time in about eight years. Now, I genuinely love all aspects of Family Ministry, but working with Middle School boys was an amazing opportunity for me to draw closer to Jesus. There were times that were some of the most frustrating moments and there were times that were some of the most rewarding hours. One night, these middle school boys were making fun of me for being old. Middle Schoolers haven't developed proper love languages yet. They asked me a question, "If you go back to any age, what age would you choose?" They inserted their burns and their jesting, but this question actually had me thinking.

I paused for a moment and I thought about it. I was 40 when they asked. I thought maybe my 30's when doing a P90X workout was a weekly activity. I thought through my 20's when I could actually eat from the spicy menu at Buffalo Wild Wings. I do miss the times of not needing a bunch of medicine to deal with the tummy troubles. I thought about times when I was a teenager and felt like I was indestructible. The more and more I thought about it, I came to the conclusion, and answered them, "I would not go back to any age." They were all shocked and asked me why not, and I said, "I did not know Jesus when I was a teen. Ephesians 6 seems hard to live out. I don't like the obey part of that verse." This real, honest answer prompted a great conversation with the boys.

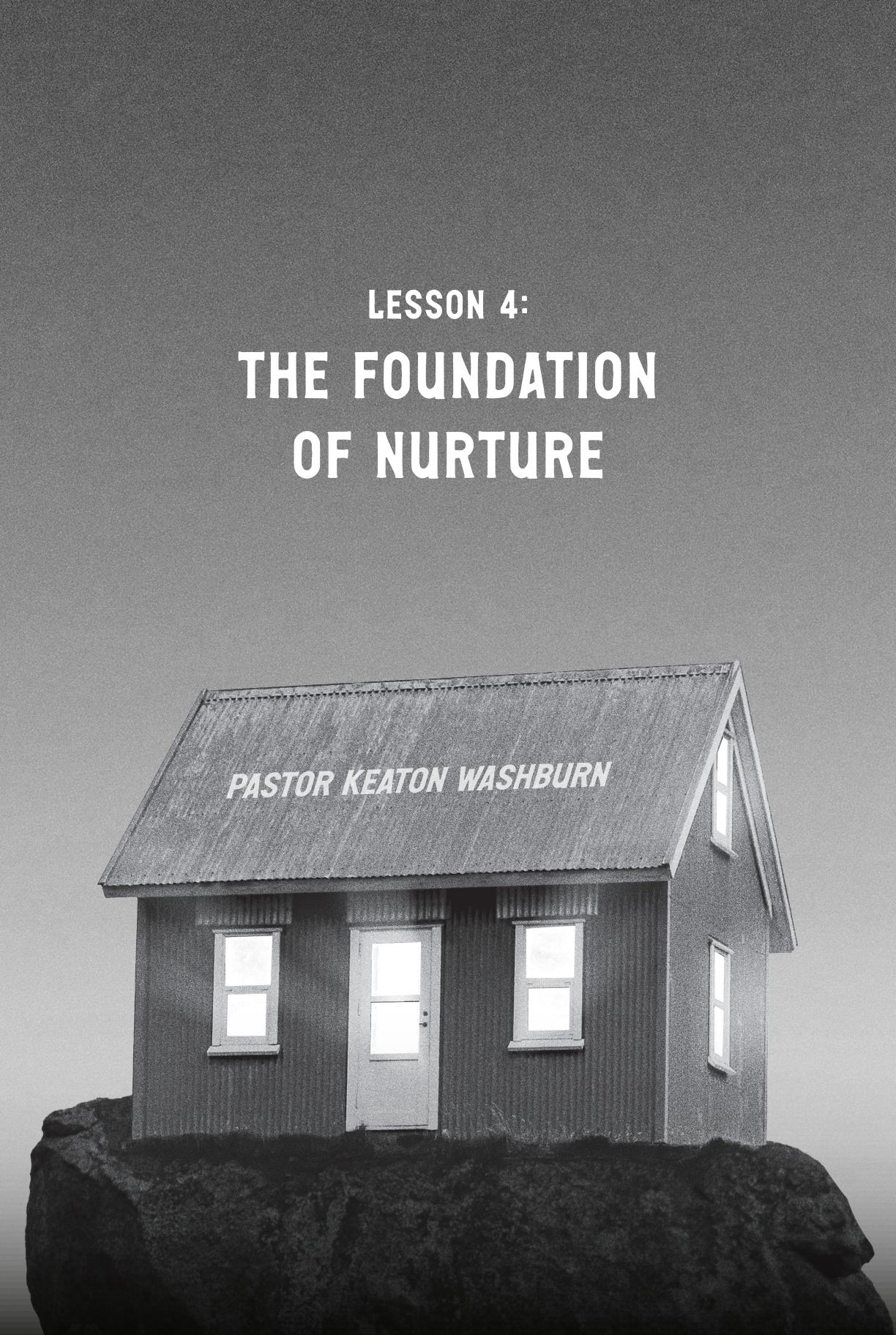
"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may

live long in the land." Ephesians 6:1-3

When you first read these verses, "**obey**" really pops out, almost like its highlighted. Now, let's be real, obedience isn't anyone's favorite thing, right? We're all born a little stubborn, naturally thinking our way is the best way. It's actually pretty funny how teenagers who think they're always right about everything usually turn into adults who think the exact same thing!

Engaging with these middle schoolers, I realized faith development has a crucial, reciprocal responsibility. Parents nurture, teach, and model worship, while children must actively listen, learn, and apply. The relationship between parents and children is a beautiful yet challenging dance. However, this dance can quickly become difficult when ego and pride emerge. It is crucial for a child to be able to discuss their perspective on life in an environment where they feel engaged, not attacked. When children feel they are able to discuss life, they become more receptive and engaged. Who knew you could get all of that from some Middle School boys?

LESSON 4:
THE FOUNDATION
OF NURTURE



PASTOR KEATON WASHBURN

There's an old debate in child-rearing whether nature or nurture have a greater effect on a person. Nature would be the genes and biology the person is born with: eye color, height, natural talents, and temperament. Nurture refers to the environment and experiences of the person: parenting style, schooling, and life events.

1. If you had to choose one, which do you think has a greater influence on who someone becomes?

The Scripture is clear that God has formed each person. Isaiah 64:8 says, ***"But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand."*** There is most definitely an aspect of nature to every person. All people have been created by God and bear his image (Genesis 1:27).

2. What are some natural characteristics that you have been given by God?

We are going to spend the majority of our time today on the other side of the coin: nurture. Parents have been given an incredible responsibility in raising children to love and serve the Lord. As new parents, my wife, Haleigh, and I have been learning firsthand that raising a child in the way that God calls doesn't happen by itself. It takes prayer, sacrifice, planning, and Godly community. We are going to boil that all down to nurturing your children.

3. What are some nurture characteristics (can be positive or negative) you have picked up or learned along the way?

As we continue in "Foundations of the Family," we read in the book of Ephesians, "**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord**" (Ephesians 6:4). Though this is seemingly addressed just to Fathers, there is reason to believe this passage speaks to both parents. Here, the word in the original language that is translated as "Father" can also mean parents. In Hebrews 11:23, the same word is used and translated as parents, "**By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.**" Each parent can learn from God's Word today even though mothers and fathers and households may have a slightly different application of this passage.

Godly Discipline

As Paul is writing this to the church in Ephesus, Fathers were the disciplinarians, and under Roman law had the authority to discipline how they saw fit (sometimes to their children's danger and detriment). This asks the question to parents: how do you discipline? Do you discipline and nurture in a way that might "**provoke your children to anger**"? Whose interest are you looking out for when you discipline? It is easy to snap at your children and lose your temper when they do something that you find annoying, but is that bringing them up in "**the discipline and instruction of the Lord**"?

4. What does it look like to bring your children up in the discipline of the Lord?

Colossians 3:21 speaks to this idea by saying, "**Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.**" Parents can either encourage or discourage their children. Parenting is a sacred privilege where God has entrusted His most precious creations to parents to raise them in the ways of the Lord. How a parent disciplines and instructs can either encourage or discourage

them. There are selfish ways to discipline and there are loving and sacrificial ways.

One of the quickest ways to discourage children is by disciplining them while angry. Overall, I have so much respect for my parents and the way they disciplined my siblings and me. If Dad was at work, Mom gave us the dreaded, "Your dad and I will discuss this when he gets home" line. At the moment, it didn't make sense, but my parents wanted to be on the same page and were very intentional to not discipline us while they were still upset about what we did. My parents were unified with this, and I know for a fact that it didn't happen by accident. They had discussed and planned how to handle this.

Tony Merida, in his commentary *"Exalting Jesus in Ephesians"* gives eight possible ways to anger and discourage your kids:

- Failing to take into account the fact that they are kids
- Comparing them to others
- Disciplining them inconsistently
- Failing to express approval, even for small accomplishments
- Failing to express our love to them
- Disciplining them for reasons other than willful disobedience and defiance
- Pressuring them to pursue our goals, not their own
- Withdrawing love from them or overprotecting them

5. How did your parents discourage you?

6. How did your parents encourage you?

7. What are some things they encouraged you to pursue?

8. If you are a parent, what actions do you find yourself taking that could discourage your children?

Godly Instruction

The second directive that Paul gives parents is to bring their children up in the *"instruction of the Lord."* To do this is to disciple your children. The main task of a Christian parent is to grow your children into disciples of Jesus! The church can come alongside and aid in this, but it is ultimately the responsibility of a parent to train and instruct in the Lord.

9. If you had Christian parents, how did you see this done well in your household?

One of the most important ways to disciple your children is by talking about Jesus. If the Lord is only talked about at church on Sunday, you can't expect them to see how Jesus affects every part of their life. This means more than just preaching to your kids, but dialoguing, asking questions, and adding in a dash of your experience with God. I love what Tony Merida has to say about this, "You will need to have dialogue, not just monologue, to do this. Ask them questions! Know what they believe or doubt. Know their fears. Discern matters of the heart (Prov 20:5). Speak to their hearts affectionately with lots of encouragement. Celebrate successes and small victories. Warn about the dangers of pride, laziness, and folly. And pray with them regularly."

Let's go back to the initial question we began with: is nature or nurture more important to who someone becomes? The answer is both nature AND nurture! God has created each person to bear His image and also placed people around them whom he uses to mold and shape them into His disciples. Parents have a sacred role in raising their children. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

NOTES

LET'S GO FLY A KITE

DEVOTION #1 - GRANT GRIMES

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" Ephesians 6:4

The quintessential father figure in every movie is played by a gruff, tough father who eventually learns to soften up and truly love his children. My mind immediately goes to Mr. Banks in Mary Poppins when I read through this verse. A father that is well known, a hard worker, and takes care of his family, yet when it comes down to his children he is quick to provoke them to anger. It might be that he is all too prone to be brought to anger himself. The perfect ending for these movies is the father realizing his mistakes and choosing to be patient with his kids. For many families, this is something that only happens at the movies. In our culture, a father who stirs up resentment in his children is all too familiar.

Many of us, as we read this devotion, are thinking through the times we resented or were brought to anger by our father or are looking back on moments with our kids. Throughout Ephesians, Paul uses God's design of the family to point back to Himself. A father's attitude towards his children ought to exemplify the Gospel, the relationship between God and humanity. God does not provoke us to anger or resentment but He loves, nurtures, and drives us toward the discipline and instruction of His word.

Mr. Banks does not lose his stature as a man who loves his family, is hard working, or disciplined, but begins to do these things in a nurturing caring way. This is the perfect ending. The world tells us this isn't the everyday father but we need to understand we aren't trying to be the everyday father, we are trying to show our kids the

love and care our heavenly Father shows us. One of the greatest gifts I have been given by my dad is that he never ignored my request to "go fly a kite," but was always eager to be a part of my life and to bring me up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. For some of us, we need to continue this with our kids, and for some of us, we need to be the first.

When it comes down to it, which father are you going to be?

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Memory Verse

Memorize the following verse, ***“As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.”*** Psalm 103:13

FATHERS DO NOT PROVOKE CHILDREN TO ANGER

DEVOTION #2 - KATIE PETTIBONE

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” Ephesians 6:4

Children are very fragile in all aspects, but I think a lot of the time we do not focus on their spiritual fragility. When we neglect their spiritual health, we are not setting grounds for a firm foundation. Jesus talks about hearing His words and the consequences of not setting a strong foundation on them: *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been found on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it”* (Matthew 7:24-27).

We want our children to be able to fight against the evil forces of this world and that cannot be done when we neglect to raise them in an upright and set apart manner. We do not want to be the reason our child does not run to God when they are faced with trials and tribulations. We need to be the disciples who teach our children the way of Truth and to have the Armor of God.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 says, *“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand,*

and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Children need our guidance spiritually and it starts with how we treat them. Evaluate yourself today. Are you leading them in a way that will lead them to have a firm foundation? If not, why? Spend time in prayer with the Lord and ask Him for strength and the ability to lead your children in a Holy way.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Guided Prayer

Opening Family Prayer:

Dear Lord, Thank You for all You have done for us. We are grateful that You have taken our debt and freely paid it. Your grace is sufficient. We come to You today for endurance through temptation. Be our stronghold for when we are pushed to anger, Lord. Please help us to not sin and push us towards Your will Lord. Please forgive us when we fail. We look to you for guidance when we are tempted to fall. In our weaknesses, Lord, we need Your strength. Thank You for giving us this family and may we take this blessing to honor You with our lives. We look to You and only to You, Lord. In Jesus name, Amen.

Prayer Activity Suggestions:

Have each person write or share a prayer request. Then have each person pray over the one next to them. OR Have each person write their name and a prayer request on a piece of paper and put the names in a pile. Randomly choose one person's name (you cannot choose your own name). The person you choose is the one you are assigned to pray over for the rest of the week.

EVERYDAY MOMENTS, ETERNAL CONVERSATIONS

DEVOTION #3 - KEATON WASHBURN

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” Ephesians 6:4

One of my favorite memories growing up was family picnics. You probably think of a picnic blanket outside, in the sun, maybe at a park. In my family, we had a tradition of setting up the picnic blanket in the living room of our home, eating a meal we can eat with our hands, and watching *“America’s Funniest Videos.”* I loved that time with my parents and siblings.

How does your family spend time together? Family walks? Watching a certain TV show?

When you are together as a family, what do you talk about most often?

One of the commands for families in the scriptures is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 which says, ***“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and your gates.”***

Moses took conversation seriously. He knew that what a family talks about has the power to affect each person's heart and attitude, which then leads to their actions. He highlighted four times and places that a family can talk about God's Word: when you sit in your house, when you walk, when you lie down, and when you rise. That's multiple times a day!

There's a dad that I know who has made it a habit with each of his kids to get them to school a couple of minutes earlier than their arrival time. When they get to school, they turn the car off, read scripture together, and pray. He took this command seriously to talk about God's Word with his kids and he says that it has been one of the best things for his family! So, what could this look like for your family? How can you carve out times to talk about the goodness of God and the promises of His Word?

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Read The Bible

Read Deuteronomy 6:20-25.

THE CHALLENGE

DEVOTION #4 - STEPHEN BILLINGS

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” Ephesians 6:4

As a part of today's devotional, I want to encourage you to take a moment to slow down and think through a few questions. Who in your life helped you grow in your relationship with the Lord? Who has helped you understand God's Word and the instructions God gives us inside the Bible? Was it a father, father-figure, role model, or friend?

There are so many different people in life who can help us understand who Jesus is and how to best live our lives for God. Friends, parents, family members, and co-workers are a few examples of who could play this role in our lives. However, in God's Word, when speaking of the role of the father, God shares that it is the father's role to help raise their children up, ***“in discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*** This means that it is the father's role to help a child understand who God is and to live out the instructions that He has for us in obedience before Him. While we all need to play our part in helping others understand who God is, the Father is to lead in this training.

As a young father of three young children, I am learning how to lead my family and children. I am learning how each of my children responds differently to correction. As I raise my children alongside my wife, we learn together how we can best help our children understand their sins and the forgiveness that is given to them through the cross of Jesus Christ. However, I am not a perfect father. Sometimes, I miss opportunities for my children to learn and experience the Gospel and instead provoke my children in anger.

While I fail at times, I know that Jesus was sent from our heavenly Father to this earth, to live a perfect life and set a perfect example for us to follow in our lives.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Encouragement

Today, I want to encourage each and every father reading this to accept the challenge to lead their children based on the wisdom that God has given us in His Word. However, fathers, we cannot do this alone. We need others. Galatians 6:2 says to **"bare one another burdens."** We need to come alongside and help fathers in their pursuit of leading their children and families to live obediently to Christ.

PARENTS NURTURE

DEVOTION #5 - PASTOR MITCHELL HOLMES

As parents, we are responsible for the growth and development of our children and the way that we handle interactions with our kids is instrumental in that development. Some responses that we have may lead to immediate but short-lived behavioral changes; while others are more time consuming, but lead to long-lasting behavioral modification.

Today's passage speaks about our responsibility to properly nurture and foster our children to love living their lives in reverent obedience of the Lord's Word. Ephesians chapter 6, verse 4 says: "**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**" The passage starts with a warning, stating that we must be careful not to push our children towards anger. When we are constantly critical of our children even when they try their best, are overly harsh in punishment, or place unrealistic expectations on them, we set our children up for failure and we certainly provoke them to anger.

While it may feel that this style of parenting yields quick results, it erodes trust and prevents relationship building long term. In the latter half of the verse, Paul tells parents how to bring up their children. We are called to do the work. We cannot be passive in our guidance of their young spiritual and emotional growth. This means that we must be loving, patient, kind, and involved in our children's development. This also means that in correcting behavior, we should not be harsh, but instead use correction as a tool for training, rooted in love and careful direction with God's Word as the foundation.

In order for us to hold our children to the standard of God's Word, it is important that we also be modeling it for them in the way that we live our lives.

Foundational Family Blueprint Activity - Challenge

Parents, communicate with your children that tonight, you will sit together as a family and each answer this question: "What helps you feel safe, heard, and loved in our home?"

Listen, really listen, to your children's answers without interrupting. Take notes if needed. Then, reflect together on ways to work on increasing these areas of possible nurturing and growth while working to eliminate frustration. End the time by praying as a family, asking God to help each of you grow in love, patience, and grace.

DEAR PARENTS

DEVOTION #6 - PASTOR RYAN STORY

Recently, my wife and I were reading a book called “*Read Aloud Family*” by Sarah Mackenzie. One of the quotes that really stuck out to both of us was the notion that parents love control. Mackenzie uses an agrarian example of growing a seed and states, “Don’t demand the seed blossom before its time. Your job is to plant, water and nurture.” This really hit me. I value education, character development, and the God-given task of nurturing my kids so they grow to know the Lord and they make an impact for His kingdom.

When Ephesians 6:4 says, “***Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,***” I had a new way of looking at this verse in light of hearing the perspective that it is God who brings growth. It truly humbled me to realize that I needed to change my heart. While I would love to say my parenting life is the “ideal,” I feel what every parent can feel about raising kids: it is hard to remain patient while waiting for your child to grow. I often reflect on the moments of immense pride and overwhelming joy all us parents experience watching our children acquire new skills, whether that be walking, riding a bike, or learning to read.

In recent weeks, my wife and I have encountered a mounting frustration regarding our four-year-old son’s potty training journey. This particular experience has been a stark contrast to our older children, who seemed to pick it up with relative ease. The ongoing struggles have left me feeling disheartened and self-conscious, as if our parenting skills were under scrutiny or judgment. It’s a common feeling, I believe, when one child deviates from the typical

milestones that others in the family, or even peers, seem to achieve effortlessly.

Amidst these challenging moments, the profound and simple truth resurfaced in my mind, offering a much-needed perspective shift: I can only "plant, water, and nurture." This powerful realization serves as an important reminder that while we, as parents, are responsible for providing the necessary environment, tools, encouragement, and love, we ultimately cannot control our children's growth. Just as a gardener cannot force a seed to sprout before its time, we cannot compel a child to grow. Our role is to create the conditions for growth, to offer consistent support and guidance, and to trust that, in due time, they will flourish.

As parents, we have to shift our focus from control to trust. So, next time you feel frustrated because your kids aren't where you think they should be, remember it is your job to plant, water, nurture, and, most importantly, trust God. Have faith in the plans that He has for you and your children.

OUR VISION

Matthew 28:19-20: ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”***

REACH

At The River Church, you will often hear the phrase, “We don’t go to church, we are the Church.” We believe that as God’s people, our primary purpose and goal is to go out and make disciples of Jesus Christ. We encourage you to reach the world in your local communities.

GATHER

The goal of weekend gatherings at The River Church is to glorify Christ in all we do! Whether it be through singing, giving, serving, or any of the variety of ways He has gifted us and called us together, Jesus is at the center of it all. We celebrate that when followers of Christ gather together in unity, it’s not only a refresher, it brings life-change!

GROW

Our Growth Communities are designed to mirror the early church in Acts as having ***“all things in common.”*** They are smaller collections of believers who spend time together studying the Word, knowing and caring for one another relationally, and learning to increase their commitment to Christ by holding one another accountable.

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