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Four pillars of a Biblical home



PRETORIA NORTH BAPTIST CHURCH

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Part 1

Introduction

Every building is built on some kind of structure or framework. The structure or framework serves to support the larger building and keep it erect. Without a proper foundation, structure and framework, any building would collapse *in normal* circumstances, not even to mention stormy situations.

Just like a building and a house needs a good structure to survive the elements and keep functioning, in the same way this is also true of a home. The use of the word *home* in this instance is not meant to be synonymous with the analogy of *the house*. When we mention the home, we make direct mention of **the family**. The nuclear family, which is the secular term for **the traditional Biblical family** and is the focus of this article. We will be examining the structure or framework that a **family NEEDS** to be stable and strong. We will be looking at **FOUR PILLARS OF A BIBLICAL FAMILY**. In this section we will look at the first **pillar**.

Pillar 1: The fear of the Lord

Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD. - Psalm 128:1-4

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. - Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. - Proverbs 1:7

AN UNHEALTHY 'FEAR OF THE LORD'

- * A negative, unholy 'dread' of God
- * God is a cruel and vindictive despot
- * God is a harsh, hard-to-get-along with Father

Some Examples . . .

- * Matt 25:24-25

- * Deut 2:25

A HEALTHY 'FEAR OF THE LORD'

- * A positive, holy fear of God
- * God is a righteous judge
- * God is a loving Father (cf. Heb.12:6-13)

Some Examples . . .

- * Prv 1:7; 8:13
- Eccl 12:13
- Job 28:28

Some Consequences . . .

- * It will impoverish you and your family. It will reduce the quality of your family.
- * It will drive you away from God
- * It is destructive
- * It weakens
- * It brings with it a lot of worries
- * Inhibits fruitful living (
- * Creates fear of people and circumstances
- * Leads to defeated attitude
- * You will always worry what people will think of you and not so much about what the Bible says

Some Consequences . . .

- * Enrich and your family
- * Draws you toward God
- * It is constructive
- * It strengthens and empowers you
- * It worships the one you fear
- * enhances fruitful living
- * drives out all other fears
- * Stimulates responsible actions
- * Blessing of the fear of God

Due to the amount of heresy and false teaching in the world today, we do feel it necessary to clarify that when we make a statement like "Enrich you and your family", we are stating that as a spiritual enrichment.

Two complimentary **definitions** of what it means to have a wholesome “fear the Lord” in a positive sense are as follows:

Wayne Mack: Simply put, the fear of the Lord is the inevitable response to a growing biblical understanding of and relationship with the true and living God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ (p. 7)

Tedd Tripp: Living in the fear of God means living in the realization of accountability to Him. It is living in the light of the fact that He is God and we are creatures. He sees all; everything is open before Him. Living in godly fear means living in full light of God as a holy God who calls His people to holiness

Mack’s definition emphasizes *that which prompts the fear of the Lord in us* – i.e. our understanding of and relationship with Him.

Tripp’s definition, on the other hand, emphasizes *that which the fear of the Lord prompts in us* – i.e. living in full light of that understanding and relationship with Him.

Both of these emphases are essential to a well-rounded, wholesome fear of the Lord.

2. ELEMENTS OF: What does it entail to ‘fear the Lord’?

The man who fears the Lord has a BIG concept of God which includes:

- an all-pervasive sense of the presence of God (Ps. 139: 7-10)
- an all-pervasive sense of dependence upon God (Rev. 4:11)
- an all-pervasive sense of responsibility to God (Rom. 11:36)
- an all-pervasive sense of relation to God

Our primary relationship is to God ---- all other relationships are determined by, and to be interpreted in terms of our relation to Him

Importantly, then, while the fool who does not fear God says in his heart, “There is no God,” (Ps. 14:1) and “in all his thoughts there is no room for God” (Ps. 10:4b), *the first thought of the God-fearing man in every circumstance is God’s relation to him and his circumstance, and his and its relation to God.*

THIS IS GOD-CONSCIOUS LIVING AND THIS IS WHAT THE FEAR OF GOD INVOLVES!

PRODUCT OF: What happens when we 'fear the Lord'?

This kind of God-consciousness will motivate and empower you to:

- a loving and total commitment to God
- relate to your wife and family in a God-honouring way
- structure your whole life according to God's will
- be the 'blessed' man of Psalm 128 who is a blessing to his family

Part 2

Introduction

Pillar 2: Be filled with the Spirit

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit”

Ephesians 5:18

What exactly does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

What it does **NOT** mean:

- It is not some mystical experience through some secret formula or other such means that is limited to only a small select group. No, it applies to all Christian believers.
- The filling of the Spirit is not the same as being indwelt, baptized, or sealed by the Spirit. Nowhere are believers commanded or exhorted to be indwelt, baptized by or sealed by the Holy Spirit, since these ministries of the Spirit all occur within the believer at the time of his/her conversion/regeneration. The only command regarding the Spirit's ministry in the believer's life is the commandment to be filled. This means that although every believer is indwelt, baptized, and sealed by the Spirit, unless he is also filled with the Spirit he will live in spiritual weakness, frustration, and defeat.
- To be filled with the Spirit does not mean that we have Him somehow progressively added to our life until we are full of Him – as when someone pours water in a glass up to the rim. It's not a matter of quantity, but of control.

What it **DOES** mean:

- Rather than those *'filled with the Spirit'* having more of Him, He is said to have

more of them ---- not in terms of quantity, but of control.

- The Greek word *plhrow* ('filled') has the connotation of total control. The person who is filled with sorrow (Jn. 16:6), anger (Lk. 6:11), fear (Lk. 5:26) or even Satan (Act. 5:3) [same word *plhrow* in each reference] finds himself no longer under his own control but under the control of that which dominates him. To be filled with the Spirit is to be surrendered under His total dominion and control.

What does it mean to be 'filled with the Spirit'? It means He is in control and I'm not ---- to be 'filled' not with me but with God!

Be filled is also an imperative --- i.e. it's in the language of command. In other words, God says, "Thou shalt be filled with Me!" This means that it is not an option for Christians. Paul is not making a polite suggestion that we should be filled with the Spirit. No, to resist the filling and control of the Holy Spirit is flagrant disobedience against the clear teaching of God's own Word!

Be filled is also a passive command, which simply means that the filling is not something we do, rather it is the work of the Spirit Himself. But the Spirit will not forcefully take control of our lives. We are to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of sanctification.

Be filled carries with it the idea of continuous, day-by-day, moment-by-moment submission to the Spirit's control. "Always be filled!" ----- literally, 'continue to be being filled with the Spirit.' (The strange word order is the best way to try and bring across what the text is stating).

What are the conditions for being filled with the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-38)?

1. Confession of Sin --- (**Prov 28:13**) If the Lord will not forgive us until we confess and forsake our sins...surely He will not fill us with His **Holy Spirit!**

2. Desire to be Filled --- "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (v. 37) Normally, you do not seek a drink of water until your body tells you that you are thirsty! The same is true for the Spirit Filled life, only those who are thirsty...only those who have a desire to be filled will ever be filled

3. ASK God to Fill You: "let him come unto me and drink" (v. 37) --- that supposes a man moving from where he is to where Christ is and requesting a drink from Him.

4. BELIEVE That God Fills You By Faith: "*He that believeth on me as the SCRIPITURE hath said*" (v.38) God has commanded us to be filled with the Holy Spirit...God has promised us that He will fill us with the Holy Spirit! When we desire to be filled, and ask God to fill us...we must simply believe He fills us.

Note: We cannot fulfill our God-given role in the home unless we heed God's instruction to "be filled with the Spirit". Apart from the energizing power of the Holy Spirit we cannot love, submit, obey, or apply any of God's will to any household relations as we should (cf. Jn.15:5).

Note how the Apostle Paul connects household relations with the Spirit's fullness in Ephesians 5:18 – 6:9

In this passage, Paul doesn't just say that we must 'be filled with the Spirit' and leave it there. Rather, under this umbrella statement to "be filled with the Spirit"(v.18), Paul explains that, relationally, this controlling idea will

work itself out in submission toward one another (v.21). He then explains how that '*submitting*' (v.21) will look in household relations: in the marriage between husbands and wives (vv. 22-33); between parents and children (6:1-4); and between slaves and masters (6: 5-9).

The simple order of the apostle's thought teaches clearly that the instructions of 5:22 – 6:9 cannot be fulfilled in the life of a believer without first taking to heart the great and central and key principle to "be filled with the Spirit" (v.18). The exhortation hinges into what follows; the examples that follow build upon the preceding exhortation.

Part 3

Introduction

It is important to note that a Biblical family must have all four pillars erect and standing in order to have a functional, biblical and God glorifying home.

A point that should also be noted is that some families are stronger with certain pillars than others. Sometimes as a family you need to make one aspect more of a focus than the others.

Pillar 3: The fruit of the Holy Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

- Galations 5:22-23

A. The Connection

What do you think would happen in a household where husband and wife / Mom and Dad are 'filled with the Spirit' ? ---- (that is to say, submitted under His total control and dominion as we have discussed in the material under pillar # 2 , above). Would their home not be one characterized by the 'fruit of the Spirit'? It *certainly* would !!

The Spirit's production of fruit in a believer's life could be compared to a man standing on a ladder in an orchard, picking fruit and dropping it into a basket held by a helper below:

No matter how much fruit is picked and dropped, the helper will not receive any unless he is standing under the ladder with his basket ready.

The point is this: we are only standing in the right place with our basket ready to receive the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. 5:22-23) when we are 'filled with the Spirit' (Eph.5:18)

A SPIRIT-FILLED HOME *WILL* BE MARKED BY 'THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT' RATHER THAN THE 'ACTS OF THE SINFUL NATURE' (cf. vv. 19-21)

B. The Characteristics

Let us walk through the various aspects of this 'fruit of the Spirit':

- **LOVE** – *Agape* love is the form of love that most reflects personal choice, referring not simply to pleasant emotions or good feeling but to willing, self-giving service. This first characteristic of spiritual fruit, then, speaks of a sacrificial commitment to the welfare of another

person regardless of that person's response or what he or she might give to me in return.

This love is:

- exemplified by Christ: 1 Jn. 3:16
- commanded of believers: Eph. 5:2

- **JOY** – *Chara* joy always speaks, in the NT, of *a feeling of happiness that is based on spiritual realities*. This is a deep, enduring inner thankfulness to God at the thought of His goodness and at the thought that all is well between the believer and His God.

Note: this joy is not caused by physical circumstances; on the contrary it is often greatest when those circumstances are the most trying.

This joy is

- exemplified by Christ: Heb. 12:2; Lk. 10:21
[‘overjoyed (*agalliaw*) in the Holy Spirit’]
- commanded of believers: Phil. 4:4

- **PEACE** – *Eirene* peace is that tranquility of mind that comes from being right with God through Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:1). Again, like joy, peace is not caused by physical circumstances. Rather, this peace is a heartfelt tranquility anchored in the overwhelming consciousness that even in the storms of life, the believer finds himself in the hands of God.

This peace is:

- exemplified by Jesus: Is. 9:6; Jn. 14:27
- commanded / promised of believers: Phil. 4:9

- **PATIENCE** – *Makrothumia* patience speaks of a tolerant and enduring willingness to accept circumstances that we would rather be free from. This is a self-restraint that does not retaliate in the face of provoking situations.

This patience is:

- **KINDNESS** – *Chrestotes* kindness speaks of a tender concern for others just as the Lord has for the believer. This attitude will work itself out in a sensitive awareness and willingness to seek out ways in which to best help and serve others.

This kindness is:

- exemplified by Jesus: Matt. 11:28, 29; 23:37
- commanded of believers: 2 Tim. 2:24

- **GOODNESS** – *Agathos* goodness speaks of moral and spiritual excellence that is known by its sweetness and active kindness. This goodness is an unswerving capacity to deal with people rightly in the best interests of God even when they need correction.

- exemplified by the Lord: Ps. 34:8
- commanded of believers: Gal.6:10

- **FAITHFULNESS** – *Pistis* faithfulness speaks of Christian loyalty and trustworthiness. This is an inner attitude that manifests in my remaining true to my spiritual convictions and commitments.

- exemplified by Christ: 1Thess. 5:24; Rev. 19:11
- commanded of believers: Rev. 2:10

- **GENTLENESS** – *Prautes* gentleness can also be translated ‘meekness’. This quality speaks of that humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense without wanting to take revenge or get even. In other words, this is controlled strength dispensed from a humble heart.
 - exemplified by Jesus: Matt. 11:29; cf. 21:5; 2 Cor.10:1
 - commanded of believers: 1 Tim. 6:11; Col. 3:12

- **SELF-CONTROL** – *Encrateia* self-control speaks of an inner mastery of my passion, appetites that enables me to submit my desires to the ever greater cause of God’s will.
 - exemplified by Christ: epitomized in all He did, but cf. Matt. 26:39
 - commanded of believers: 1 Cor. 9:25, cf. 7:9

Part 4

Pillar 4: Love (1 Cor 13:4-7)

If we add the “love of Christ” to the ‘fear of the Lord’ (pillar # 1), the ‘fullness of the Spirit’ (pillar # 2), and the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (pillar # 3), we will have a home life that “never fails” (1 Cor. 13:8).

1. "Love is patient." Therefore, I will bear with my spouse's worst behavior, without retaliation, regardless of the circumstances.

2. "Love is kind." Therefore, I will diligently seek ways to be actively useful in my spouse's life.

3. "Love is not jealous." Therefore, I will delight in the esteem and honor given to my spouse.

4. "Love does not boast." Therefore, I will not draw attention to myself exclusive of my spouse.

5. "Love is not arrogant." Therefore, I know I am not more important than my spouse.

6. "Love does not act unbecomingly." Therefore, I will not engage my spouse in ungodly activity.

7. "Love is not self-seeking." Therefore, I will be marriage-spouse oriented.

8. "Love is not provoked." Therefore, I will not resort to anger as a solution to difficulties between myself and my spouse.
9. "Love keeps no record of wrongs." Therefore, I will never keep an account due on my spouse.
10. "Love does not rejoice evil." Therefore, I will never delight in my spouse's unrighteous behavior, nor will I join in its expression.
11. "Love rejoices in the truth." Therefore, I will find great joy when truth prevails in my spouse's life.
12. "Love bears all things." Therefore, I will be publicly silent about my spouse's faults.
13. "Love believes all things." Therefore, I will express unshakable confidence and trust in my spouse.
14. "Love hopes all things." Therefore, I will confidently expect future victory in my spouse's life, regardless of the present imperfections.
15. "Love endures all things." Therefore, I will outlast every assault of Satan to break up our marriage.

Bibliography:

- The main source for this article was part of the syllabus of Christ Seminary's Pastoral Home lectures as taught by Pastor Andrew Isiaho.
- www.christbaptist.co.za
- www.christbaptistseminary.co.za
- Other sections of this series will be built on the structure as presented by Pastor Andrew in his class, although extra sources will be added for the next two articles.