

Family Shepherds - Calling and equipping men to lead their homes.

Session 1: Gaining a more Biblical view of the family.

We need to hold our ideas of manhood and the family up to the light of scripture.

There's a generation of men who sense God's Spirit calling them to something more, but they have no idea what that "more" looks like.

We will look to the Bible to guide us. It is hard to overestimate the importance of the family in general, and fathers in particular.

The role of men in their families is so important that God honored it by conferring upon us His own title, Father.

The goal is the gospel.

The gospel is our only hope. The family is a delivery mechanism for the gospel.

In **Ephesians 5 and 6**, the role of fathers loving their wives and discipling their children, the responsibility of wives to submit to their husbands, and the duties of parents to their children are all couched in terms that are unmistakable in their gospel-centeredness. This is all about Christ and the church. **Eph 5:32** *"This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church."*

It's about God's redemptive work that began in the garden with the marriage of the first Adam to his bride and will end at the wedding of the last Adam, Jesus Christ to His bride at the consummation of history.

Every family between the first one and the last serves to remind us of the impact of the fall and our need for redemption.

In the meantime, God has called father's to walk patiently, purposefully and prayerfully as we lead our families toward all that is ours in Christ.

We need to Shepherd our families in the direction of the Good Shepherd.

Who is responsible for discipling children?

Family or pupit?

Old Testament: (**Deut 6:6-7; Psalm 78:1-8; Proverbs 4:1-4**)

New Testament: (**2 Tim 1:4-5; 3:15; 1 Tim 3:4-5; Col 3:20-21; Eph 6:1-4**)

Here Paul quotes the fifth commandment from **Exodus 20:12** and **Deut 5:16**. Then he echoes the teaching of **Genesis 18:19; Deut 6:7; 11:19; Psalm 78:4 and Proverbs 22:6**. He is therefore establishing a pattern of discipleship in the Christian home. Paul clearly didn't view the Old Testament teaching on family discipleship as being obsolete.

No new pattern.

Robert Plummer: “The New Testament writers viewed passages in the Old Testament about the importance of parents passing on spiritual truth to their children as authoritative divine instruction. The ‘newness’ of the new covenant was found in the Messiah’s consummated work of salvation and in the regenerative work of the Spirit – not in any radical alterations in parent-child relationships.”

Yes, we have the Church, but that does not overturn the clear pattern of family relationships, responsibility and discipleship. There must be balance. Our allegiance is to Christ and His bride, the Church. However, our obligations as husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons and daughters are a crucial part of that allegiance. It’s not either or, it’s both.

From Genesis to Revelation, we see a clear picture of the family in redemptive history, and the role of the father in the family. This is no small matter. The Bible leaves no room for fatherhood that doesn’t take seriously the responsibility of raising children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Whether it’s found in the Law, the Prophets, the Gospels, or the Epistles, our calling is clear.

We must shepherd our families.

How do you make a Christian disciple?

We will look at Titus to guide us on this.

It’s not about teaching our children to behave so as to not embarrass us. It is much more important than that.

We’re raising our children with a view toward leading them to trust and to follow Christ.

As part of a local body of Christ, we are also doing this in conjunction with other families who are doing the same.

Keep this in mind when we are looking at Titus. We are part of a much bigger.

Discipleship is not the total of Paul’s message here in Titus but it is a crucial element.

Vaudie Baucham: “For Titus’s mission to succeed, he will have to “teach what accords with sound doctrine” (2:1) and “urge the younger men” (2:6); he must “in all respects... be a model of good works”(2:7); he must “show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame” (2:7-8). He is to “declare these things” and to “exhort and rebuke with all authority” (2:15), and to “remind them”(3:1).

In other words, Titus will have to be a disciple-maker.

Paul also also makes it clear that Titus is not to do this on his own.

He tells Titus to appoint elders who “hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught” and who “may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine”(1:9).

The first two chapters of Titus give us a pattern with **three legs of discipleship**.

- (1) Godly, mature men and women in the church**
- (2) Godly, manly pastors and elders**
- (3) Biblically functioning homes.**

Raising godly, mature men and women.

(Titus 2:1-5)

Godliness: Men and women of godly character. Sanctified through grace.

Mature: Paul is not referring to age alone here. He is speaking of spiritual maturity. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. (Rom 8:29; Phil 2:13; Eph 4:13-14; Rom 6:19;)

Godliness and maturity are not only gifts granted by God's Spirit to the individual believer; the context in Titus 2 makes it clear that they're gifts granted to the church for the purpose of discipleship and mentoring.

Men and Women: There are important boundaries to be observed because the roles of men and women differ. It is clear though that both men and women have a role to play in discipleship.

Godly, manly elders.

You would ask yourself, how are godly, manly elders supposed to help me shepherd my family?

They need to be good examples. (1 Pet 5:3)

Example to follow. All men, especially younger men, should aspire to these qualifications.

(Titus 1:5-9).

Home and Family; Personal Character; Ministry of the Word.

Biblically functioning Homes.

(Titus 1:10-11)

The teaching ministry of the elders is therefore linked directly to defending the discipling ministry that's carried out specifically in families.

It might feel awkward for us to think of the family as a central player in discipling but Paul is very clear about this fact in Eph 6:1-4.

We will look at this passage again in a later session but let's just point out the obvious points here.

It is fathers – not youth pastors, children’s ministries or children’s churches – who are charged with the duty of discipling the next generation.

Again, this is not inconsistent with the role the pulpit plays in discipling. In fact, the home is the proving ground for elders.

Paul emphasizes the importance of the family in evaluating potential elders (Tit 1:6-7), as an outpost to be protected doctrinally (Tit 1:10-12), as the locus of primary ministry for young women (2:4-5), and as the focus of the instruction of older women to the young.

There is a synergy between strong Christian homes and strong churches, with the ministry of the family shepherd serving as an indispensable element in the health, well-being, and future of the church.

Richard Baxter: “The life of religion, and the welfare and glory of both the Church and the state, depend much on family government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we shall undo all.”

In conclusion

We need to ask ourselves very hard questions.

Are you watching too much TV? Are you working long hours and into the evenings? Are you carrying too much debt? Is your mortgage too big? Are you spread too thin driving up and down to piano lessons and rugby practise?

Why should we ask these questions?

Because you will come to the conviction that you need to shepherd your family in obedience to God, only to find out you don’t have the time or the resources to do it. Something has to change and adjustments have to be made. Something will have to be forsaken. Too often that something is the spiritual commitment that started the process.

If you are a father and family shepherd, you must evaluate your lifestyle in all areas. Your love for the Lord, your belief in the gospel, and your pity for your family should compel you to take honest inventory and lay yourself bare before the Lord, knowing that He alone can give you what you need to bear fruit in these areas.