

**CGYG-LIFE Marriage-Family Life group**  
**Session 2: (January 8, 2011)**  
**Foundations of a strong family (part 2): Roles within the family**

**Recap of previous session:**

- strong family life is founded on Christ-centered lives of the husband & wife (father & mother)
  - starts at the level of the individual – can't impart to your spouse/children what you yourself don't have
  - husband & wife are both responsible individually before God (even if he also bears responsibility for her)
  - but they can also help each other grow in Christ
  
- this requires intentional ordering of marriage & family to orient one's personal & family life towards Christ
  - default pathway in the sinful nature is to drift away from – not towards – Christ
  - deliberately organizing life & daily activities to facilitate growth in Godliness → impacts on how you spend your time, energy, money, etc.

**Roles of each member in the family**

***Husband/Father***

-provides **leadership** to the marriage and family (Eph. 5:22-33) → provides direction, security & stability

-3 key aspects:

-*authority*:

-husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church

→ has prerogative to direct the family and to make decisions that are binding on his wife & children and must be obeyed by them (insofar as they do not contradict God's law)

-authority is such that God permits a husband/father even to nullify vows made by his wife or unmarried daughter living in his home (but only the 1<sup>st</sup> time he hears of it) (Numbers 30)

-*responsibility*:

-to lead his household to love and serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15)

-as head, the man bears primary responsibility before God for the family

e.g. Adam was confronted first by God (Gen. 3:9) and bears primary responsibility for the Fall (e.g. Rom. 5:12-14), even though Eve sinned first

-sinful choices/decisions can impact the family for generations to come (Exod. 34:7)

-to live a Spirit-filled life that models Christ and demonstrates His love to his family → encouraging them and calling them to live Godly lives (cf. Paul's example in 1 Thess. 2:7-12)

-to feed & care for his wife, not just physically, but especially spiritually; to help her be sanctified (Eph. 5:25-33; 1 Peter 3:7) → a loving headship, like Christ's headship of the church

-not to embitter their children, but to discipline them and bring them up in nurture and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21 – it is the fathers who are addressed even though mothers typically are the ones providing the bulk of the care to the children)

-*sacrifice*:

-leadership in Scripture is not a call to **privilege**, but to **suffering**; following Christ's example, not to be served, but to serve (Matt. 20:20-28)

-a husband is to give himself for his wife, as Christ gave Himself for the church (Eph. 5:25)

-a father is to work selflessly and endure toil/hardship for the sake of his family (1 Thess. 2:9-11)

***Wife/Mother***

-follows and gives support to the husband/father's leadership → fosters harmony & peace/well-being in the home

-a most influential role with tremendous potential for lasting impact, whether for good or for ill

-3 key aspects

*-submission:*

-God's design in creating woman to complement the man and be a "suitable helper" for him (Gen. 2:18)

-this design is reflected in wife's submission to her husband in everything, as the church submits to Christ (Eph. 5:22-24)

-a submission not just outwardly, but inwardly, from the heart (Eph. 5:33) → shows forth the inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, of great value in God's sight (1 Pet. 3:1-6)

-without submission, home life becomes hardship rather than joy (Prov. 12:4; 21:9, 19; 27:15-16)

*-building/nurturing:*

-primary focus on building/nurturing the home/family

-"The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down." (Prov. 14:1)

-"Proverbs 31 woman" (Prov. 31:10-31) – "watches over the affairs of her household" (31:27); works diligently for the good of her husband and family (against modern distortions of this passage, the home/family is the primary focus of her life)

-includes managing the home, and caring & providing for children & family members (Prov. 31:10-31; also 1 Tim. 5:14-16; Titus 3:3-5)

-does so not just with diligence, but with tenderness and compassion (1 Thess. 2:7)

-builds strength, and brings beauty and grace to the home (Prov. 31:17-25)

*-wisdom:*

-Wisdom is personified as a woman in Proverbs (as is Folly) (see Proverbs 9)

-Wisdom is key to building one's house – Proverbs 23:3-4: "By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures."

-comes from fear of the Lord: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Prov. 9:10)

-the wife of noble character "speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue" (Prov. 31:26), because she is one who first and foremost fears the LORD (31:30)

### **Children**

-to live in obedience under the authority of their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3; Col. 3:20)

-most instruction in Scripture regarding raising of children deals with issues of character and training in godliness

-establishes principles governing decision-making in these areas that have to do with things like motivations behind choices, development of godly character, etc.

→ details of questions like what school they should attend, what career they should choose, what activities (e.g. music, sports, etc.) they should do, etc. work out of these principles

### **For discussion:**

-What does a godly husband/father's leadership look like in practice? What are ways a husband/father can be intentional in his leadership in the home? How can wives be encouraging their husbands in this role?

-What does a godly wife's support of her husband look like in practice? What are ways a wife/mother can be intentional in her role of supporting/building the home? How can husbands be encouraging their wives in this role?

-Do the complementary roles of husband & wife define who should do what in day-to-day life (e.g. cooking, cleaning, changing diapers, etc.)?