

# MBC MEN'S STUDY

## LEADERSHIP 7: MAN AND HIS HOME

### CLASS 5: THE SHEPHERD LEADER AT HOME

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Before getting into the book, here is the layout of the framework for our five-month men's study class.

- **Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>:** *The Exemplary Husband* chapters 7-8
- **Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>:** *The Exemplary Husband* chapters 9-10
- **Mar. 12<sup>th</sup>:** *The Exemplary Husband* chapter 14
- **Apr 16<sup>th</sup>:** *The Exemplary Husband* chapters 16-17
- **May 21<sup>st</sup>:** *The Shepherd Leader at Home* Instructing and leading your family

### PURPOSE OF THIS 5 MONTH CLASS

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- Why do we want to talk about the man and his home?
- We have talked about many theological and technical subjects over the past couple years, this is where all that knowledge and information has the chance to be lived out.
- While not everyone is called to the elder role in a church, all men are called to live for the glory of God, all husbands and fathers are called to lead, guide, feed and protect their families.
- If you are desiring the office of elder, Paul says in **1 Timothy 3:4-5** “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?).”
- While this applies to those who are elders, there are many other exhortations throughout the Bible which speak of having an organized, peaceful, spiritual and well-ordered home (Deut 6; Pro 24:3-4; Col 3:19; 1 Tim 5:8; Eph 5:25-31).
- Over the course of this class, our hope is that you are going to grow in several key areas of bring a man of God. As you grow in these areas, you are also going to grow in being a husband, a father and a leader of the family. The overall purpose is for your life to bring honor and glory to Christ and to be an example to others.
- This class is going to examine our heart. We want to have a clear definition of what our heart is, the relationship that our heart has with our works and what influences our worship and love.

# HOW THE FAMILY IS BEING DESTROYED IN OUR CULTURE.

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## Feminism

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- “A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.”<sup>1</sup>
- The goal was to unhitch women from the traditional labels and roles that had built the American culture. They desired, and wholly welcomed, unwed parenthood and easy divorce as steps to gaining their long fought for liberation.
- Social scientists across the political spectrum agree this family chaos is destructive. In 2017, the poverty rate for woman-headed families with children was 36.5 percent, compared with 22.1 percent for father-only families and 7.5 percent for families headed by a married couple. And abundant data show married adults are happier, healthier and wealthier than singles.
  - The sexual revolution has scythed through the institution of marriage, leaving millions of women without the love and emotional and financial security that they and their children so need. It hasn't been a picnic for men, either.<sup>2</sup>

## LGBTQ / Transgenderism Agenda

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- We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.
  - We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).<sup>3</sup>
- “We know that the nuclear private household is where the overwhelming majority of abuse can happen,” author Sophie Lewis explains. “And then there’s the whole question of what it is for: training us up to be workers, training us to be inhabitants of a binary-gendered and racially stratified system, training us not to be queer.”<sup>4</sup>
- There are now "conscious efforts to drive the Creator out of civic life; the rapid spread of pornography; new demands for easy divorce; attacks on the meaning of 'wife' and 'husband'; a swelling of rhetoric of 'gender' and 'sexual' rights; conscious state campaigns aimed at population control; steps toward easy abortion;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nypost.com/2018/07/07/feminism-has-destabilized-the-american-family/> 05/04/2021

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20200408020723/https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/> 05/04/2021

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/want-to-dismantle-capitalism-abolish-the-family/> 04/04/2021

claims of sexual revolution; rejection of the concepts of duty and long-term commitment; and startling advances in the manipulation of human life.

- As the author suggests, pushing these agendas is directly linked to population control. Without coming out and saying it in black and white terms, our society is deciding who reproduces and who does not with the LGBTQ agenda.

## **Independence / Selfishness**

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- A desire to have freedom, over and above a family; to make money and live a “comfortable” lifestyle.
- Because our society celebrates the loner, institutions like the family and church have come increasingly under attack as many see them as infringing on their private life.
- The ideological enemies of the family include all those who would, whatever their motivation, strip the family of its functions, reduce the authority of parents, remove the social honor attached to marriage and family, and reassign family functions to the state and its ever-expanding bureaucracy. These social revolutionaries would include feminists, advocates of the welfare state, secularists, and social revisionists represented by developments such as the "children's rights movement" and movements of sexual "liberation," especially the homosexual rights movement.<sup>5</sup>

## **Advantaged vs. Disadvantaged Children**

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- Do you read to your children? A study in 2015 showed that by doing so, you have given your children an advantage over those who are not read to on a consistent basis.<sup>6</sup>
- By telling the Western world that having a “normal” functioning family is detrimental to those who do not, the hope is not that parents would desire to read more, but that there would be less “family time.”

## **Tradition Equals Subordination**

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- But unfortunately, “tradition” is indeed often used to justify discrimination and crackdowns on rights and is easily hijacked by nations determined to flout the rights of particular groups and to quash broader social, political, and legal freedoms. In such environments, “tradition” subordinates human rights. It should be the other way around.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nationalreview.com/2015/05/professor-if-you-read-your-kids-youre-unfairly-disadvantaging-others-katherine-timpf/> 05/04/2021

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/01/11/trouble-tradition#> 05/04/2021

- For LGBT people, *the language of traditional values tends to cast homosexuality as a moral issue*, and not a rights issue—as a social blight that must be contained and even eradicated for the good of public morality.

## Marxism / Communism

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- “Abolition [Aufhebung] of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists,” Marx wrote. “On what foundation is the present family, the [traditional] family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form, this family exists only among the [traditional].”<sup>8</sup>
- Communism understood that the family is an inherently conservative institution. The family, beginning with the marriage of the husband and the wife, it defines morality. It defines on earth a primary accountability and responsibility. It implies a sacred bond and it also protects the relationship between the mother and the father and their children.
  - But when you have communism, which has at its center an idolatrous understanding of the government or the state, anything that is so resistant in claiming a higher loyalty has to be removed. That is to say that children should be raised to see the state as the ultimate authority and the arbiter of good and evil, not their parents.<sup>9</sup>

## WHAT WILL ULTIMATELY BE THE EFFECTS?

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### Tearing down and restructuring of the family will have detrimental effects.

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- Mass Shootings...since 2009 there have been 251 mass shootings, 1426 dead and 958 injured<sup>10</sup>
  - One of the key elements that researchers have found is that common to all mass shooters is they had a history of domestic violence<sup>11</sup> and experienced a childhood trauma<sup>12</sup>. To be sure, these things are not causative nor determinative, but certainly play a role in one’s actions.
  - All of these people grew up in unstable families. Nearly 3 in 4 children and teens killed in mass shootings died in an incident connected to domestic violence.
- A complete breakdown of the structure of society. By promoting divorce, no marriage but sex and sexual encounters of all kind and also releasing all moral bounds that have been traditionally placed on society.
  - A 1926 article from The Atlantic, written by a woman living in Russia at the time, describes these efforts in detail. The term “illegitimate children” was abolished, and a law was passed that allowed

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm> 05/04/2021

<sup>9</sup> <https://albertmohler.com/2019/05/24/briefing-5-24-19> 05/04/2021

<sup>10</sup> <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/mass-shootings-in-america-2009-2019/> 04/30/2021

<sup>11</sup> Domestic violence refers to violent behavior between current or former intimate partners.

<sup>12</sup> Childhood trauma is an event experienced by a child that threatens their life or bodily integrity.

couples to divorce in “a matter of a few minutes.” Legislation was introduced to eliminate distinctions between legal wives and mistresses, granting property rights to the unmarried consorts.

- **“Chaos was the result; Men took to changing wives with the same zest which they displayed in the consumption of the recently restored forty-per-cent vodka.”**<sup>13</sup>

- **Marriage is a key pillar of stability for both sexes and especially for children.**

- Divorce has led to unintentional consequence as women are commonly worse off financially after divorce than their ex-husbands.
- Social scientists across the political spectrum agree this family chaos is destructive.
  - In 2017, the poverty rate for woman-headed families with children was 36.5 percent, compared with 22.1 percent for father-only families and 7.5 percent for families headed by a married couple. Abundant data show married adults are happier, healthier and wealthier.
- Recent studies about the effects of fatherlessness have revealed that the rise of single-parent (which usually means mother-only) families has had even worse consequences for boys than for girls.
  - About half of American children will spend part of their childhood in a single-parent home.
- Father absence in African-American homes leads to more mental-health and behavioral problems for boys, according to an MIT study by two economists looking at brothers and sisters born in Florida between 1992 and 2002. “Growing up in a single-parent home appears to significantly decrease the probability of college attendance for boys but has no similar effect for girls.” They found other worrisome effects, too.  
***“Fatherless boys are less ambitious, less hopeful and more likely to get into trouble at school than fatherless girls.”***<sup>14</sup>
- **Everything is connected.** When more boys are growing up without fathers, there are fewer young men who become the kind of adults women want to marry — educated, employed, non-drug-abusing and not involved with the criminal-justice system.
- Without the grounding of marriage, men become disconnected from society.
  - Some 22 percent of prime-age men (25 to 54) are not working or looking for work. Unmarried men are over-represented in this group. By contrast, married men with only high-school diplomas are much more likely to be employed than unmarried men with some college or an associate’s degree.
- Despair comes from a lack of hope in anything ever getting better, which is why alcoholism, overdoses and suicide have been rising among white, working-class Americans, the very population that has witnessed a steep decline in family stability over the past several decades.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://fee.org/articles/black-lives-matter-s-goal-to-disrupt-the-nuclear-family-fits-a-marxist-aim-that-goes-back-a-century-and-a-half/> 05/04/2021

<sup>14</sup> <https://nypost.com/2018/07/07/feminism-has-destabilized-the-american-family/> 05/04/2021

- How bad is it? "Foes have mounted attacks on all aspects of the natural family, from the bond of marriage to the birth of children to the true democracy of free homes. Ever more families show weaknesses and disorders. We see growing numbers of young adults rejecting the fullness and joy of marriage, choosing instead cheap substitutes or standing alone, where they are easy prey for the total state. Too many children are born outside of wedlock, ending as wards of that same state. Too few children are born inside married-couple homes, portending depopulation."<sup>15</sup>

What can we, as men who have been called by God, do to make sure that our families do not end up like the horrifying statistics that we just read? We need to be men of the faith who take our responsibilities from God serious, and we put all our effort into pleasing God and loving our families. **How can we do this?**

## **THE SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS FAMILY**

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- We have talked about this in great detail already, but if you do not know your wife and your family, you are not going to be able to effectively lead them.
- If you are not familiar with the various purposes of marriage, then you are going to be lost when it comes to lovingly leading and shepherding your family.
- "There is no more lovely, friendly or charming relationship, communion or company, than a good marriage." Martin Luther
- At the start of chapter 2, Witmer says "We now turn our attention to the most consequential human relationship you have as a married man: your relationship with your wife."<sup>16</sup>
- By way of review, you should be growing in your relationship with your wife by the means of getting to know her more and more.
- You do this by being there, with her, learning her interests, desires, likes and dislikes.
- You are growing in this area by communicating with your wife, having conversations with her and engaging with her when she speaks to you.
- He says to "commit yourself to building up your wife with your words."
- Make sure there are no corrupt words coming out of your mouth but words that she needs to hear.
- Those words would be for edification, exhortation and showing that you love her.
- He ends chapter 2 with an exhortation to pray with your wife.
- "Perhaps the most significant way of growing in mutual knowledge as husband and wife is to develop a regular time of prayer together."

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<sup>15</sup> <https://albertmohler.com/2005/04/07/in-defense-of-the-natural-family-2>

<sup>16</sup> Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

- This is a time when you two can come together, alone, and express your thoughts, desires, hopes, fears, and whatever else is going on.
- You not only converse with one another but also with God. This is a time of rich fellowship, a time of showing real, practical care for one another and expressing love to each other.
- **In chapter 3, he moves from the husband/wife relationship to the father/children relationship.**
- As was shown in the beginning statistics, a father who is present in the life of his child is an anomaly.
- For some reason our culture has let dads off the hook when it comes to raising their children.
- He says at the beginning of the chapter “To address the subject of knowing your children is, once again, to stress the importance of having a relationship with them, of knowing and being known.”
- A relationship is something that takes time and effort. But it also means that you must be there with your child in order to have this relationship.
- Probably the most stunning quote in this section “You only have a limited amount of time to get to know your children, to be with them, and to influence them before they leave the nest.”
- You raise your children to leave you. Under normal circumstances they are to learn what they need from you to move out and start their own life. Then, they do the same thing with their own kids.
- You have, as a father, much work that needs to be done in a very short amount of time.
- Your desire should be to be the primary influencer in the life of your children. That is not something that just happens, it is something that you must put diligent work into.
- **Witmer gives some areas that fathers can use for building this type of relationship:**
  - **Making family dinner a priority in the house.** *Mealtime should be a time of fun and laughter and not merely a parent’s food and “whine” time. These times of family interaction will help you better know your children and will give you a clue as to which child might need some more personal attention. Therefore, you must make dinnertime a priority on your schedule.*
  - **Weekly family time.** *We would try to spend most of the day doing something together. We would go to the park and play tag or throw the Frisbee, go to see Grandma and Grandpa, or stay home and play games. From their earliest days our children knew that Monday was family day.*
- The idea is that you are spending good, quality time with your kids. Not just 5 minutes here or there, but long periods of time that you can really get to know them and talk about their life with them.
- These are just a couple of ways that you can show your kids that your family is a priority in your life.
- He also talks about participating with them in the things they enjoy doing.
- *Participating with and supporting your children’s activities is a valuable way to get to know them. It is an opportunity to see how they interact with other people and how others view them.*
- We must make it our aim to know our children and know *about* our children as well.

## THE SHEPHERD LEADS HIS FAMILY

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- “People desperately need to be led. This concept of leadership is absolutely critical to the proper functioning of the family. The Lord has outlined a leadership dynamic between husbands and wives that is often caricatured and misunderstood. There is also a clear biblical description of the proper dynamic between parents and children. Much of the chaos in families today is the result of the failure to respect these relational dynamics established by our Creator. It is to these relationships that we turn next.” (Witmer, chapter 4).
- “Marriage is a call to die [to self], and a man who does not die for his wife does not come close to the love to which he is called.” R. Kent Hughes. (in Witmer)
- **The Dignity of Women** (chapter 5)
- While we have gone over this material before, I think that it is well worth noting again for two reasons.
- Chiefly among them is the fact that it is the truth, the Bible gives women the same dignity and place in God’s kingdom as men.
- Secondly, our culture will want to sway you one way or another. It will tempt you to either think less of a woman or think that a woman is greater than a man. Neither of those are true. As a person created in the image of God, your wife’s standing is the same as you before Christ.
- It is our roles that are different, you are called to lead, and she is called to submit.
- It is a complementary relationship where the husband and wife are both submitted to the Lord so that they are able to serve each other by pleasing Him.
- Some of the key points Witmer draws out for us about a wife’s submission:
  - Paul uses the term to show the relationship between a husband and a wife, not to show the wife’s ultimate role is to submit. (**Eph 5:21**).
  - Your wife’s submission to you is voluntary, not something that she must do to all men. The Bible never says *husbands, make your wives submit*. It is up to her to do so as she is doing it unto the Lord.
  - When your wife is submissive, it is not so that you can feel superior to her, but it is an act of love towards Christ. She acknowledges that you are the head of the household and that there is an order which has been established.
- “Your leadership must be motivated by a desire to see your wife grow in holiness and to assist her in fulfilling her God-given roles of wife and mother.”
- If you want to lead your wife well, you must have a heart to see her flourish in her walk with the Lord. If your only goal is to see her submit to you or to worship you as king of the household, she is going to die in her relationship with Christ and ultimately with you.



- As was stated in the beginning, our culture is pressuring your wife to look down upon motherhood, do not value her role as a wife and to seek fulfillment outside the home.
- You as a husband must be able to lead her lovingly and patiently into holiness and help her find contentment in the high calling of being a Biblical wife.
- Your wife may wear many hats throughout the day and face pressures and stresses that you can't imagine.
- By God's grace and design he has placed you there to tenderly shepherd her through it all.
- **Chapter 6** starts with a classic Spurgeon quote "Train up a child in the way he should go...but be sure you go that way yourself."
- Witmer says "Children desperately need direction in life. They want to know what's really important. They want to know what they should do. They will look to their parents to find answers in these matters. If the answers are not clear, they will find them elsewhere: from their peers, the media, or culture at large."
- Your kids desire you to lead them. They need direction and they need discipline. If you are not willing to give your heart to your kids, they are going to go elsewhere.
- I personally believe that what Richard Phillips has to say in *Masculine Mandate* is by and large some of the best material on being a father.
- He says "One lament common to Christian fathers goes something like this: 'Pastor, I don't know how this happened. He has gone to church his whole life. We have taken him to Sunday school and Vacation Bible School, and paid for Christian school tuition. We have monitored his friends to make sure they come from good families, and we spanked him when he was little. I thought those things would keep this from happening!'"<sup>17</sup>
- Far too many Christians mistake a Christian environment or structure for the gospel message. Your child will not be saved because they went to a Christian school or never had a "bad" friend.
- **Children are to be built up and protected by their fathers.**
- "A man is called to work the hearts of his children that they might become fertile soil for the gospel and devotion to Christ." (Phillips)
- As a Father, you are called to keep you children from sin and protect them from its influence in their life.
- You must not allow the church, the school, good friends, videos, podcasts, or any other thing to be the main voice of spiritual matters in your children's life.
- You are to disciple them, actively bringing the Word of God down into their hearts and minds.
- As Phillips says "...the process of bonding with your children so as to guide their hearts personally to faith in Jesus."
- Our goal is not to have academically astute children or children that act properly all the time.

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Phillips *The Masculine Mandate*, chpt. 9.

- Our hope and goal should be to have children who love the Lord their God and seek to please Him in every facet of their life.
- As Phillips says, **Proverbs 23:26** “Give me your heart, my son, and let your eyes delight in my ways.” Is the top parenting verse in the book of Proverbs.
- This is the very pulse of parenting and how our relationship with our children should be categorized.
- Every father should have a deep desire, a longing to have his son’s heart so that he may show him the way to the Lord.
- Why is it that some children seem to go astray, even when brought up with all the right Christian structure and influence? As Phillips says, “too often the answer is that he [the father] never aimed for the child’s heart and, not aiming for it, never gained it.”
- We don’t want to aim so low as to just talk about behavior that can be manipulated to seemingly, please us.
- We want our children to trust and love us that they willingly give us their hearts as we lead them in their relationship with the Lord.
- What is the key step in gaining your child’s heart? As Phillips says, they have to know that they have yours.
- “Such a giving of a father’s heart to a child is not a one-time event but a continual demonstration of love, patience, grace, mercy, and dedication over time. Our children must gain from us what they most desire: our affection, our approval, our attention, our involvement, and our time.”
- We must resist our other passions (*even though they may not be wrong*) so that we can spend our very limited time gaining the trust of our children.
- There are four ways that Phillips says a father must use to reach his child’s heart:
- **Read:** A child must hear the Word of God from your lips. It is not enough that they hear it at church, Sunday school, etc. they must hear it from you, be allowed to ask questions and hear you explain what the text is saying. We must make time to read the Bible with our kids.
- **Pray:** We tend to the hearts of our children when we pray with and for them. As you children for what they need prayer for and then pray for them throughout the day. Follow up with them as to how that thing is going for them.
- **Work:** Fathers need to work with their children. This can include their school work or just simply working around the house. As you are teaching them the basics of what it means to be the leader of the house, you are encouraging them on the path forward.
- **Play:** Fathers should play with their kids. This means that families need to have some lighthearted times together where they are encouraged to laugh with each other. Know the games and toys that your kids are into and make sure that you can keep up a mildly interesting conversation with them. Sometimes, all your kids desire is that you are there to listen to what they are saying...even if you don’t fully understand.

## THE SHEPHERD PROVIDES FOR HIS FAMILY

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- “But concern for provision cannot be limited to the body. We must also address the need to nourish the soul. These are both important responsibilities of shepherd leaders at home. We must have a holistic view of this fundamental shepherding function, including both material and spiritual provision.”

### Material Provision (chapter 7)

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- When talking about material provision, the greatest thing that we can do is point our families to the Great Provider, God Himself.
- **Philippians 4:19** “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”
- How we portray this to our family will, no doubt, impact them more than what we actually have.
- As Witmer points out, we must have a “childlike dependency on God.”
- It is your responsibility as the husband / father to keep all things in perspective for your family.
- You are only able to do this *if you* have an unshakeable faith that the Lord is going to take care of you.
- **This is chiefly done through prayer.** Our prayers to God are going to show our dependence upon God.
- If you have a robust personal, private prayer life, that is going to be shown in your public prayer life.
- If you spend time alone on your knees before the Lord, your family is not only going to see your actions but also hear your words when you pray with them.
- Interestingly enough, a few verses before **4:19**, we read in **4:6-7** “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
- If we are anxious about the provision of God, we are not going to be leading our families well.
- We must pray to God for those provisions and then allow Him to work them out. We are still called to do what we must in our daily life, but we are called to trust that the Lord will take care of us.
- As we are striving for holiness and godliness in our life, the Lord is going to be taking care of us.
- We want to have the peace of God and that comes from making our needs known to God through prayer.
- When praying, we also want to thank God for what He has done for us.
- As you look around your life, you can see the kindness of God all over it. The multitude of blessings that you have are only because of God. As you pray, let Him know that you are thankful.
- This means that you don’t always see yourself in need but that you are recognizing that the Lord is working in your life and that He is faithful.

### Generosity and Contentment (Witmer, chapter 7)

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- I believe that these two heart conditions go together.
- When we are generous, it teaches our hearts not to hold onto material things too tightly.

- It also teaches that we are not the owners of anything, but that we are God’s stewards of the gifts and blessings He has given to us.
- As we are generous, we also *learn* to be content (**Phil 4:12**).
- Contentment is not something that comes naturally to anyone. It is something that must be learned.
- This is an attribute that is learned by going through the times of life.
- As you are teaching your family to use their time and resources for the glory of God, you are also teaching them the value of being content with what God has given to them.

## Spiritual Provision (chapter 8)

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- “Every family ought to be a little church, consecrated to Christ and wholly governed and influenced by his rules.” Jonathan Edwards (quoted in Witmer)
- Your family, as much as they do need spiritual things, they are in greater need of spiritual provision.
- “As the shepherd leader at home you must make provision for your family to receive this nourishment from the word of God found in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. While you need to make sure your family benefits from the training provided at your local church, you must also strive to engage your family regularly in the Word at home.” (Witmer)
- The husband’s responsibility is to have the Word of God front and center in the home.
- **Deuteronomy 6:6-9** “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
- There is no other way to train your children to love the Lord with all their heart and mind. We must have God’s Word all around us, or the world will put their desires in the hearts of our children.
- Listen to all the ways that we are to provide for our families:
  - First, the commandments of the Lord are to be on your heart.
  - Then, you *diligently* teach them to your own kids.
    - You accomplish this when you sit at home, when you go about your normal life, when you put them to bed and when you get up in the morning. In other words, the totality of your life is centered around the Word of God...in tangible ways.
  - Then, you have God’s Word around you so that when you look in places or go places in your house, there is a constant reminder of who God is and what He expects from His people.
- This is what it looks like to have a life which is completely dedicated to knowing God and striving to serve Him in excellence.

## THE SHEPHERD PROTECTS HIS FAMILY

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- Far greater than any physical harm which may come upon your family is the harm that a husband who does not guard his heart may do.
- Proverbs 4:23 **“Guard your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”**
- Acts 20:28 **“Be on guard for yourselves...”**
- Hebrews 2:1 **“For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.”**
- There are many more verses which speak of the necessity of watching over our hearts so that we do not allow them to fall prey to the sin which desires to be over us.

### Marital Unfaithfulness

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- “Unfortunately, among the catalog of temptations now are sexual desires gone wild. I am convinced that one of the greatest threats to your marriage is inappropriate sexual desire. It is a perennial problem everywhere in society.” (Witmer)
- Practically speaking, there is nothing that will destroy your marriage faster than sexual immorality. The statistics are staggering for the number of marriages which have been destroyed by sexual immorality.
  - This includes pornography and adultery.
- This sin of sexual immorality is widely accepted and promoted in our culture today. There are no boundaries which our culture believes should be in place.
- Since our culture has cast off the restraints of God and His righteousness, it is a “do what makes you feel good” culture.
- As Christians, we must be actively fighting against this in our own hearts and in the hearts of our family.
- Just because our culture says that it is okay to do what you want sexually we must know that the Lord punishes it severely.
- Hebrews 13:4 **“Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”**
- Your sin will always be known to God.
- God hates adultery. It destroys people and their children and makes light of the holy relationship between Himself and His people which is often spoken of in terms of marriage.<sup>18</sup>
- Understand that there is forgiveness when sexual immorality has taken place, but the wound that it leaves may be marked for a long time.
- This is why the put-off and put-on theme is so important in our Christian walk.

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<sup>18</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Hebrews, James, I & II Peter, and Jude*, The Christian Counselor’s Commentary (Cordova, TN: The Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 132–133.

- We must be able to recognize when we are going down these paths. Nobody “falls” into pornography or committing adultery. These are acts which we do because there has been something stirring our hearts.

### **Protect Your Children (chapter 10)**

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- “As protector of the sheep, a shepherd is committed to keeping them from straying and to restoring those that stray. Protecting your children is a major responsibility you have as a shepherd leader at home.”  
(Witmer)
- You must make sure there are clear boundaries in your home for your children.
- This is what Witmer calls “proactive protection.” Your children must clearly know what is right and wrong.
- You must be able to point them to the Bible and show them where you are getting these boundaries from.
- God gives us boundaries so that we are protected, likewise we must do the same for our children.
- “Begin with the timeless principles found in the Scriptures. Remember that our goal as we lead our families is to glorify God and to help them understand what it means to glorify the Lord in their lives. We do this by instructing them in the paths of righteousness. The boundaries we set have to do with pleasing the Lord, not ourselves.” (Witmer)
- Our boundaries, which Witmer says, must be a reflection of what God desires...not what we want. We must fight the temptation of setting boundaries for our ease and comfort and not for the glory of God.
- As with any boundary, there are consequences which come for crossing over them.
- You should clearly explain to your children what the boundaries are and what the consequences are for crossing over them.
- The goal of parenting is to distinguish between their “childish” actions and their “disobedient” actions.
- Further, you never want to allow behavior early on that you must punish later.
- Allow your child to repent, ask for forgiveness and then extend forgiveness to them and restore the relationship with them.
- By doing this you are modeling what their behavior should look like, but you are also modeling how God behaves towards us.
- Our desire should be to see our children grow up to fear the Lord and serve Him with their whole life. If that is our goal, then what we do will further help them to go down that path.