

# GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN & WOMEN: IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH

## CLASS 2: WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL FAMILY?

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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- The goal of this series is to understand what the Bible has to say about men and women in general. Not necessarily a new controversy, but with the rise of transgenderism, homosexuality, and many other gender confusing ideologies, it is important for the Christian to know where the Bible stands.
- Before getting to the Scriptures, we are going to start with how the world views men and women. We are going to discuss the world's attack on gender and God's original design.
- Overall, we want to understand *what the world defines* as men's and women's differences, similarities, and then we are going to find out *what the Bible has to say*.
- After defining men and women from a biblical viewpoint, the rest of the classes are dedicated to viewing men and women within their respective roles.
- We are going to look at what a biblical family is, how a biblical family can influence the world around them and what some of the priorities of parents should be in their home.
- Then the final few classes we will look at what the Bible has to say specifically regarding men's and women's distinct roles, both within the church and home.
- **Here is the schedule for the upcoming lessons:**
  - January 5<sup>th</sup>: Introduction and what the World and Bible say about men and women.
  - **January 12<sup>th</sup>: What is the biblical family? How can a biblical family influence society?**
  - January 19<sup>th</sup>: What are the priorities of parents?
  - January 26<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of women in the home?
  - February 2<sup>nd</sup>: What are some of the roles of women in the church?
  - February 9<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of men in the church?
  - February 16<sup>th</sup>: What are some of the roles of men in the home?
  - February 23<sup>rd</sup>: What are some priorities of a husband with his wife?

## INTRODUCTION

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- After learning some about feminism, homosexuality, and transgenderism, it is now time to move onto how the Bible tells us that men and women are to operate.
- Those worldly ideologies only seek to tear down what the Bible upholds and then rebuild the structure in their own eyes and desires.
- Since those three ideologies take aim at the biblical family, that is where we are going to start our study.

## DEFINING THE BIBLICAL FAMILY

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- The family is the foundational institution of society ordained by God. It is constituted by marriage and is composed of people related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption.<sup>1</sup>
- The only way that a family will reap the full rewards of God is if they hold to the Biblical model.
- Biblical model does not mean man, woman, and biological children *only*.
  - It is important to remember that God is sovereign in giving biological children to couples (though adoption is also at the heart of God's plans, Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:5-7), He is also sovereign over if your spouse and/or children pass away.
  - While it is true to say that the Biblical model for a family is one man, one woman and their children, it certainly does not happen that way all the time. Some of the circumstances which lead to this are out of our hands (death, adultery, etc.) and some are the effects of our sin (adultery, abuse, etc.).

### What makes a traditional family into a Biblical family?

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- From a sociological viewpoint, the purpose of the family is to ensure the continuation of society. This is done primarily in two ways<sup>2</sup>:
  - **Biologically**: through procreation
  - **Socially**: through the socialization of the total family
- This is what is called the *Traditional Family*.
- Since this is the overall goal from a secular point of view, the function of the family may be the same but the overall nature of the roles of the individuals are going to change.
  - **Example**: since the secular culture says that a family is defined by being able to procreate, the concept of procreation has been changed to now include men.
  - If our society is going to accept men being women and women being men, then in order for that ideological framework to succeed, there has to be changes which take place.

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<sup>1</sup> "God's Design for the Family" Auburn, n.d., <https://www.eng.auburn.edu/~sjreeves/cm/family.html>

<sup>2</sup> "Sociology" University of Minnesota Libraries, n.d., <https://open.lib.umn.edu/sociology/chapter/15-2-sociological-perspectives-on-the-family/>

- They cannot say our society is going to continue *without procreation*. That would simply not be acceptable at any level, so they say “men” can become pregnant.
- Now we have what is called the *LGBTQ family unit* (to be sure, this is not a family by any rational definition from anyone)
  - This definition has been in constant change over the past decades and will continue to change because of the absurdity of this lifestyle.
  - There is no reliance on traditional or heteronormative definitions as this group of people continue to add to the chaos by their sinful choices. (marrying animals, children, etc.)
  - There is no way that this lifestyle can fulfill *any* rational definition of what the family is.
- Any non-Christian traditional or LGBTQ family can certainly appear to be successful.
- They can maintain a marriage between a man and a woman, (or same sex) they can live their lives without any apparent sin, raise their children to be good citizens and productive members of society.
- For all intents and purposes, they look like what we would consider the Biblical family. There is peace in the home, the appearance of love between all the family members, an orderly home, etc.
- **So, what separates these families from a Biblical family?** If these families are taking care of their kids, their spouses and they are being productive members of society, why is that not enough?
- If you’re not a Christian, there is no hope whatsoever that you can make your marriage and your family everything God intended them to be, unless you first acknowledge your need for Christ and trust Him as Lord and Savior.<sup>3</sup>
- If your family does not recognize Christ as the Lord and savior of their family, the seeds of your family are going to ultimately break down and have no real spiritual stability.
- God is the one who designed marriage:
  - **Genesis 2:24** “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”
  - God is the one who created man, woman and brought them into a one flesh relationship.
- As a man and a woman are married to each other, they constitute a family. But it is only when that family seeks to honor and glorify God as born-again believers that they now become a Biblical family.
- Remember what Jesus said in **Matthew 10:37** “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”
- Christ demands to be first in the family, that we love Him more than we love our own family.
  - The greatest part of this command is that when we put Christ first, when we love Him the most, we are going to love our own families with a love that they cannot comprehend.
  - When we seek to please Christ, we are going to be pleasing to our family.

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<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family: God’s Design for Your Family* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 3.

- When we seek to serve Christ, we are going to be serving our family.
- This is something that the unsaved and onlooking world will never be able to fully comprehend (1 Cor 2:14).
- While other non-Christian families may look the part, they are only living for each other or just themselves. They are not living for the glory of God.
  - The nonbiblical family may work, for the time being. It may seem that each person is putting their own desires on hold, but there is going to be a breaking point.
  - Someone is going to want to be repaid for their sacrifices. Someone is going to finally be tired of the one who “always” has to give up their dreams.
  - Without Christ at the center of the family, the home will eventually start to fall apart at its very foundation and the cracks will become evident.
- How elevating it is to realize that your family is the divinely ordained and primary vehicle to bring glory to God.<sup>4</sup>
  - God is the one who must have the center of our focus as a family.
  - While important to the family, education, money, and prestige should never take the place of what it looks like to glorify God.
- This is what should separate you from your “good” nonbelieving neighbors. Your decisions, your desires and your attitudes are not based on worldly information but solely on pursuing Christ.
- The biblical family will be set apart from the worldly family by how they order their life and how they pursue the things they hold most important.

## **HOW CAN WE MANIFEST A BIBLICAL FAMILY TO A FALLEN WORLD?**

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- There are many practical ways that we can do this, and we are going to look at more of them as we continue through this 8-week study. We are just going to touch on them now and move deeper into each one as we look at specific roles and duties of each person in the biblical family.
- Now we are going to look at 4 ways every family should be living for the glory of God in their daily walk.

### **Through our Influence of Society**

- When we recognize our family as a tool for the Lord, we are going to make decisions which seek to bring Him honor and glory.
- One of the crucial ways a Biblical family can be used is for the betterment of their society, or the immediate people around them, is that they interact with those people on a regular basis.

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<sup>4</sup> Kent Hughes and Barbara Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Family*, rev ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 16.

- **Ephesians 5** has much to say about the believer’s walk in this world and how the Biblical family is to function in the world.
- **Ephesians 5:15-16** “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.”
- As a family, how are you using your time? What takes up your days and weeks?
- The phrase *be careful* is an imperative verb, a command from Paul. It means *to discern* or *to perceive*.
  - This means that our days should have purpose. We should have goals that we want to accomplish and things that need to be done.
- Think about the influence you have on society just by being a biblical family with a Godly purpose.
  - Once again, this is not having a worldly purpose. We do not want to fall into the trap of thinking this life is all that there is to live for.
- Our purpose is to glorify God and we can do that by making sure our days are taken up with things that have eternal value. Just as Paul said, we make *wise* decisions throughout the day.
  - We want what we do to count, not just for today but for all eternity.
- If it has to do with what job you take, what house you buy, where you move to, where you spend your money, etc. There are a million decisions that we make that can have a Godly impact on the people around us, that is why Paul says *be careful how you walk*.

### **Through our husband-and-wife relationship.**

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- **Ephesians 5:22** “*Wives*, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”
- **Ephesians 5:25** “*Husbands*, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...”
- We are going to look much closer at both of these concepts in the upcoming weeks, but for the purpose of influencing our society, these should be at the top of our list.
- **Firstly, the wife is to submit to her own husband...as to the Lord**
- While we all know this is a loaded topic, it is no less true. Just because our society looks at all submission as evil, does not take away from the sweetness of this command.
- Submission has nothing to do with worth but everything to do with roles. Both the husband and the wife have equal worth in the eyes of God, but they have different roles.
- As a wife tells her neighbors, coworkers, friends, and family that she *must talk to her husband first* or *my husband doesn’t think I should do that*, she shows her love for Christ submitting to her husband’s desire.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “Husband’s desire” obviously does not include sin or things which would harm the wife or the children. There may be times that the wife does not agree with the husband, but there is nothing morally or ethically wrong. In those instances, once she has been able to give her opinion and personal desires, it may be that she simply must submit as God has placed her husband as the head of the family. The wife should never comply with sinful requests of her husband or anything that would bring disgrace to the name of Christ.

- Submission is not ultimately to the husband, but to the Lord. This means that even when the husband is unworthy, the wife can still joyfully submit because her heart is to please the Lord.
- **Secondly, the husband is to love his wife, as Christ loved the church.**
- How did Christ love the church? Paul says *He gave Himself for her*. Christ literally died for the church. He set aside everything else and served the church by His death.
- This is how the husband is to serve his wife. He is to put her first and show her that same love.
- Paul also defines this love in **verses 28-29** “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.”
- Husbands are to take care of their own wife just as they take care of themselves.
- Practically, this means that a husband may not be able to have his dream job if it does not take care of the family. He may not be able to play 3 rounds of golf every weekend as it puts too much stress on his wife.
- He may need to tell his friends, coworkers or family that his wife or family needs him, so he is not able to participate in some events.
- This means that the husband must grow-up, take on responsibility and be a man.
- Both husbands and wives can greatly influence the people around them simply by living with each other as the Bible has commanded.

### **Through the Sanctifying Effect of Marriage**

- When we were first married, the new relationship revealed rooms of selfishness in our lives—and within those rooms’ doors to other rooms, and in those rooms yet other doors and closets. The revelation was the beginning of an ongoing, lifelong housecleaning.<sup>6</sup>
- How can we manifest a Biblical family to a hostile culture? You as the husband or the wife are becoming more and more like Christ because of your spouse.
- How does this look practically? You do not complain about your spouse or talk about how you would do something differently because you know more.
- You have a desire to grow in Christlikeness and realize that your spouse can speak this truth to you.
- You have a heart to listen to your spouse when they talk, taking the good and the bad. Not becoming defensive or avoiding responsibility that God has given to you.
- **Proverbs 19:14** “House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.”
  - The word for *prudent* here means *wise and understanding*. Our wives are gifts from the Lord so that they can wisely, and in an understanding way, speak into our lives for our growth in godliness.

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<sup>6</sup> Hughes, 17.

- **1 Peter 3:7** “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”
  - While there is a lot packed into this verse that we will discuss in future classes, I just want to point out that men are to be understanding to their wives and to show them honor.
  - This means that as the husband is seeking to better understand his wife, the wife must be willing to be understandable.
  - The husband should be seeking the betterment of his wife, but the wife should have the desire to allow her husband to do this.
- As both the husband and the wife are killing their own pride and allowing their spouse to sanctify them, they are going to be noticed by people around them.
- Instead of getting upset when your spouse says something, you would rather take it to heart that there may be some truth in what they are saying.
- We live in a culture that is solely centered around self and what an individual can gain. Far too many people complain about their families to anyone who would listen, some intentionally and others just out of habit.
- When you see your spouse as someone who God has placed in your life to make you more into the image of Christ, you will find a deeper love for them and for God.
  - You and your spouse are not enemies but partners. Both of you desire to grow in Christlikeness so both should be joyful when the Lord, in His grace, uses your spouse to do just that.
- If you’re single, these may be the friends, family and coworkers that are placed around you. You also have a great opportunity to show others the gospel by allowing people to help you grow into the image of Christ.

### **Through how we parent and shepherd our children.**

- As Christian parents, we are not to “abandon them to the winds of culture and evil spiritual forces.”<sup>7</sup>
- We are going to discuss this more in-depth in the next class, but it is important to highlight some of the ways we can influence our society by our parenting.
- Parents are to take an active role in both their children’s education and spiritual health.
- Parents should be both preaching the gospel and living it out in front of their kids on a regular basis.
- The world is not going to teach your children right from wrong, you and your Bible are going to do that.
- This is a very practical way we can manifest a biblical family to the onlooking world.
- When your desire is not for your child to win all the games, but to glorify God, other parents are going to take notice when your priority is the church and not the game.

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<sup>7</sup> Andreas and Margaret Köstenberger, *Parenting Essentials Equipping Your Children For Life*, (Scotland, GB: Christian Focus Publishing House, 2020), 95.

- When your child cares more about how he plays the game than he does about winning at all costs.
  - This is going to be counterculture to many in the sport.
- If our focus is on education only, then we are going to fall into the trap of the world.
  - This is not to say that education is not important, we should have well-educated children.
- But, if our child's education is the bar with which we measure their success in this world, then we are not going to be able to manifest the glory of God to the onlooking world.
- Parents should aim their children at pleasing the Lord no matter what they are doing.
  - If that means they have high academic goals, that's wonderful.
- Our parenting should not reflect the character, standards, or desires of the world. By simply parenting our children for the glory of God we will show what a biblical family looks like.

## **CONCLUSION**

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- In this class we discussed what the biblical family is and is not.
- Even though the world may define what a family is, we need to look to the Bible for what God has designated a family to be.
- Men and women have roles in the family that are exclusive to them.
- By adhering to what the Bible says, we are able to manifest a biblical family to the onlooking world. We do this by influencing society by how we make decisions, how we live as husbands and wives, how we allow our marriages to sanctify us, and how we parent our children.
- Each of these areas of our life will look vastly different to the onlooking world and hopefully help point them to Christ.

## **QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION**

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- How do you see your family influencing the culture around you?
- Have you ever thought about your family being a tool that God uses to bring others to saving faith in Christ?
- What areas of your parenting can you see are different than the worlds? How have you become influenced in your parenting by the world's standards?