

## Love, Honor, and Respect: God's Plan for the Family

### Introduction:

- I. When I was asked to speak on this topic back toward the end of last year, at first I was just excited to be a part of this lectureship.
  1. However, as I thought about my topic, “God's Plan for the Family,” I began to think: “I've been married for only a year and a half, I have no children, and I don't see how I could say anything to teach or inspire anyone to respect God's plan for the family.
    1. In February, though, my wife and I began to take care of three of her cousins, aged 7, 9, and 11 at the time. We got a crash-course in parenting and family relations!
    2. In all that has panned out over the last six months, my wife and I have become increasingly aware of the one part of the family that, in many ways, is beyond our understanding: God's plan.
      1. We can look back and see God's plan. The boys' babysitter became good friends with my wife while we were all in college. We began helping the boys with homework two years ago, and began keeping them three or four nights a week to ensure they had their schoolwork done and could go to church with us. We decided to buy a vehicle that could support all five of us in December, and in February, we became (at least a temporary) family.
      2. The thought of such a plan just floors me every time I think about it. God's providence reaches back before I really even knew these boys. And yet, there is more to God's plan and providence. It is only just beginning to unfold!
      3. The truth is that there is a goal—an end in mind—that God has for my family. Although I cannot know the mind of God or every little detail that he has in store for me, I do know that my eyes and ears need to be open to look and listen for those opportunities to follow his plan.
    3. So today, this is not an authoritative lesson on how to raise your children—Take it as merely a few things I have learned in my crash-course in Family Planning!

### Discussion:

- I. God HAS a plan for your family!
  1. The family is God's way of reflecting for humanity his relationship with Christ and the church. It is a starting point at which mankind can begin to see how God relates to mankind.
    1. Ephesians 5:22-33 – {Especially 32} – He is talking about the church in this passage, and then says, in effect, “Anyways, husbands love; wives respect.”
      1. If a father is not loving and selfless for his family, how will his children grow to know God's love and self-sacrifice to us?
      2. If a mother does not respect and submit to her husband, how will her children grow to respect and submit to God?
      3. Our families need to fit God's general plan for the human family!
    2. It is a great relief for me to know that God has a plan for my family. At times I feel like he could be the only one who could have a plan. You know, when you feel at a loss when it comes to what you and your family should do?
      1. You feel like you just have to “wait it out” until the right way, or the way of escape, if it be the case, becomes visible to you?
        1. Isaiah 40:29-31 – They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. God will take care of us!

2. We get so bogged down sometimes when the bills aren't paid, the refrigerator is empty, and you can stick your toes out of the end of your shoes, but have we forgotten that our God is still in control of this world? He still has a plan for your family!
  3. When we reach this point of realization that God has a plan, we come to that point of responsibility. Where does this plan involve me?
- II. God has a plan for YOU in your family!**
1. In our rushed society, this is perhaps one of the easiest things for us to forget when it comes to our family.
    1. We get caught up in sports, schoolwork, housework, running errands, etc., and forget that our families should be headed somewhere!
      1. Ephesians 6:4 - "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
        1. That phrase, "provoke...unto wrath," is used in Romans 10:19, and guess what? It is talking about Israel as defiant children!
          1. How is it that Israel is made to be angry and jealous?
            1. God was found by those who did not seek, and was visible to those who had not asked to see him.
            2. God stopped treating Israel like a son, and started treating the Gentiles like his sons.
              1. How often do we do that with our jobs? Our children seek to spend time with us, want a relationship with us, and we never have the time for them. Yet we have the time to work more hours or see another television show. We are taking the attention owed to our children and giving it to those who did not seek it! That stirs up our children!
  2. The opposite of provocation is the Lord's nurture and admonition.
    1. We must train them to do God's will, and warn them of what will happen if they do not do it! How do we do this?
      1. II Timothy 2:2 - "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
      2. Titus 2:4-6 - "[The aged women likewise...] that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded."
        1. Where does this training take place? At home. Where is it reinforced, or in the case of children without Christian parents, where does it take place? At church!
          1. How many parents honestly say they need no help in teaching, raising, training, and watching their children? We could all use a hand in raising our children—and where should we start?  
**CHURCH!!!**
3. Bring (not send) your children to church! However, the training is each parent's obligation!
  1. I Timothy 4:6-16 - [READ] - These things also apply to our nurture and admonition of our children at home!
    1. Put them in remembrance - Deuteronomy 6:6-9
    2. Command and teach these things

3. Be an example (one to be imitated) – I Corinthians 11:1; Titus 2:7
  4. Give attendance to (be occupied with) Scripture reading
    1. “Hold on to” - cf. People reading “Harry Potter” or “Twilight.” Our focus (delight) is on the Word (Psalm 1:2-3).
  5. Give attendance to exhortation – Provide encouragement!
  6. Give attendance to doctrine – Titus 2:1, 8
    1. Many people today have no idea how much power there is in a good, solid reputation! No one can speak evil of you, and what they do say will likely never be believed by anyone!
  7. Meditate on (practice) these things – Make it natural!
  8. Give thyself wholly to them – Make it sincere and devoted!
  9. Watch out for yourself and what you teach – It will save you and those who will listen to you!
2. This plan for you in your family is of the utmost importance. That new TV episode will just have to wait. The office will have to get by without you for a little while. You have a job to do, and you need to do that job according to God's plan.

### III. Do not count on your own “plans.”

1. You cannot count on your own plans to get the job done.
    1. We are human.
      1. We get tired.
      2. We get sick.
      3. We get overbooked and overwhelmed.
      4. We forget.
      5. We pass away.
        1. Our plans and promises are not what we often crack them up to be.
          1. How many marriages end in divorce?
          2. How many diets or savings accounts accomplish their goals?
          3. Are you beginning to see the wisdom in what the Bible says about promises?
            1. Matthew 5:33-37 – Look at the progression.
              1. We cannot swear by heaven, or even our planet, or by even one city on earth.
              2. We have no power to swear even by the very hairs on our heads.
                1. How little control we have, and yet we promise like we control it all!
                2. Anything more than “yes” or “no” is from the evil one!
    2. James 4:13-17 - “Go to now” - The Greek equivalent of “Come on!”
      1. We do not know what our life will bring us, or whether that life will still be ours!
      2. If the Lord wills [if it is in the Lord's plan], I will do this or that.
        1. If I try to make my own plans without giving place to the Lord's will, I am setting myself up for failure.
        2. By making promises and plans without regarding God's will, I am boasting myself to have God's power and control!
2. Contrarily, our plans need to be built ON God!
  1. Psalm 127 – Notice how this ties together everything we have discussed.
    1. Build on the Lord, or you might as well not build at all!
    2. Overworking does no good if you do not live like God's beloved people.
    3. Your family is God's reward to you in this life—Don't neglect it.
    4. Your life should be filled with your family. That is God's plan for you.