

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 2-14-10 AM
 “A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW OF THE FAMILY”
 VARIOUS SCRIPTURES
 #5 in Series, “A Biblical Worldview”

There is no realm of truth or area of life where Jesus Christ should not reign as sovereign Lord. Seeing what each realm of truth and area of life looks like with Jesus reigning as Lord is a Biblical worldview. The realms we have looked at thus far are origins, man’s condition, and work. In weeks to come, we will look at science, education, possessions, race, social justice, the arts, economics, government, and our over-arching purpose. Today we are looking at a Biblical worldview of the family.

I. The Purpose of the Family

As with everything that God establishes, the ultimate purpose of the family is to glorify, to magnify God and His beauty, excellence, majesty, and greatness. There is no other institution on earth like the family that has such a tremendous opportunity to glorify God. Having said that, let me narrow down the purpose and give you the main way that God glorifies Himself through the family. ***The family is a laboratory for sanctification.*** I remember as a student at the University of Tennessee, I had to take a year of science and I chose Zoology. Here is how the class was taught (it may still be). We would go 3 days a week to a lecture by the professor. There would be lengthy reading assignments from the textbook for that class, and if you wanted to pass, you took good notes on the lecture. Then one or two days a week (I can’t remember) we went to Zoology Lab. In the laboratory we did hands on work to see the material we studied actually demonstrated. For instance, we had a whole section on genetics and then in the laboratory, we carried out some rather involved experiments with fruit flies and learned about their recessive and dominant characteristics. In somewhat the same way, we have the textbook for glorifying God, called the Bible. There are “lectures” every Sunday morning and evening to help you understand it. You need to read and meditate on the textbook daily. Then, there are several laboratories where you put what you learned into practice. There is the laboratory of your thought life, your ministry through the local church, your job or school, but the main laboratory where the truths you have learned from the textbook are lived out is the family. When we say that the family is a laboratory for sanctification, we using the word “sanctification” to mean being progressively conformed to the image of Christ or to grow in spiritual maturity. Through the relationship between a husband and a wife, the relationship between parents and children, and even the relationships with extended family, we have the opportunity to put on display the attributes of God. I am speaking of attributes like God’s love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, patience, purity, holiness, and God’s power. The default mode of our flesh is to be narcissistic. Let me define that word. Narcissism is being self-absorbed. When a person walks after the flesh, the three most important persons in their life are me, myself, and I. That’s the tendency, the flesh mode in every member of the family. “I have wants and needs and I want my needs and wants satisfied.” In a family (whether it is a single adult, a couple, parents and their biological or adopted children, a blended family, or a single parent family), narcissism = conflict and misery. Let me give you the opposite of narcissism. It is found in **Philippians 2:3-4 (NKJV)** “³ Let nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” The way of life described in these two verses is not our default mode; it is not the way that comes naturally. It is the way that comes supernaturally.

Often a husband or wife will say, “My spouse just rubs me the wrong way!” Maybe it is because you have a lot of rough un-Christ-like edges that need rubbing off! A teenager says, “I am so sick of them telling me everything to do”. Could it be that God is teaching you to submit to the authorities He has ordained over your life? “My Mother-in-law drives me crazy!” Perhaps God is teaching you to love supernaturally with His kind of love (“agape love”). Perhaps in a home where a single adult lives alone, he / she says, “I desperately want to be married” or “I don’t know if I can continue to resist temptation to fulfill my desires in a way that is against Scripture”. God is developing the fruit of the Spirit called “self-

control” which is the bringing under His control all natural desires. Do you get the picture? If there were no challenges in the family, we wouldn’t grow, we wouldn’t be conformed to the likeness of Christ, we wouldn’t have the un-Christ-like edges rubbed off of our life. In families, it is inevitable that we get offended and wronged. When are we more like Christ than when we forgive? The family is God’s tool to conform each member of the family to the likeness of Christ. God is determined to conform every true child of His to the likeness of Christ. He is so determined that He says that He has predestined it to be so. Listen to **Romans 8:28-29 (NASB)** “²⁸ And we know that **God causes** all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren”. Here is the tragedy. When we rebel against the instrument that God is using to break us of our flesh fueled narcissism, God just raises up another instrument. A couple can’t get along and so they divorce. If you are God’s child, that is, you love Him and have been called by Him, then He just raises up another instrument, and the second instrument is usually more harsh than the first. If a child rebels against his / her parents, God just raises up another instrument – usually more harsh than the parents. It may be the prison system, the military, disease, rejection, or any number of other things. I heard of one young man in rebellion against his parents who said, “I’m sick of them telling me what I can and cannot do, so as soon as I am 18, I’m joining the Marine Corps.”

To summarize, the purpose of the family from a Biblical worldview is to glorify God by allowing the challenges and failures within the family relationships conform us to Christ so that His attributes might be magnified in our life.

II. The Particulars in a Family

There are some particulars in a biblical worldview of the family that separates the families who follow that worldview from the families who have a culturally shaped worldview. The sad fact is that most families, even where the members of that family profess Christianity, have a worldview shaped more by culture than the Bible. That was not true of our nation’s forefathers. Most of our Pilgrim forefathers had a biblical worldview. A number of years after the Pilgrims landed on America’s shores, the population grew to about 70,000. How many divorces do you think they had that year they numbered 70,000? They had zero divorces! The next year there was zero. The next year there was one. The next two years there was zero. That is amazing: There was one divorce every 4 years among a population of 70,000 and growing. The Pilgrims were from the same spiritual line as the Puritans and they saw Jesus as Lord over all of life, including the family! Yet today, there is little difference in the divorce rate in the church and in the world. Why? It is because those in the church have lost a Biblical worldview and especially in the area of the family. Today, the median length of a marriage is 7 years! [Statistics from James Kennedy, “Lord of All”, Page 251]. How many times in counseling have I heard the words, “I know what the Bible says, but...” Well they may know some of what it says, but they don’t have a Biblical worldview because if they did, they wouldn’t disobey because they would be aware of the consequences of that action. Let’s look at 3 particulars of a Biblical worldview of the family.

A. The Roles in Marriage

I realize that many if not most of you have heard what the Bible says about roles before, but I want you to see them in a context of a Biblical worldview of the family as a whole. When it comes to the roles of the husband and the wife, there are two prominent views. First, there is **egalitarianism**. This view says that men and women are equal before God and the roles in the Bible reflected the culture at the time the New Testament was written. Therefore in a marriage, neither is head, and if there are roles, they are filled based on the abilities, gifting, and personalities of each marriage partner. Second, there is **complementarianism**. This approach to Scripture says that the roles are not tied to culture but to creation. While men and women are equal before God, there is a difference in roles. To put it another way, there is a sameness in worth but a difference in roles or function. Without apology or trying to water anything down, I am a complementarian. A biblical worldview of marriage must see a clear distinction in the role

of the husband and the wife. The roles can be summarized by one word for the wife and one word for the husband.

1. Wives Submit

Ephesians 5:22 (NKJV) “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” **Colossians 3:18 (NKJV)** “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” You must realize that the Biblical worldview is the exact opposite of the worldview of culture. In 1998 the Southern Baptist Convention stirred up a huge cloud of controversy when they made the statement of faith called “The Baptist Faith and Message” more specific in the area of the family. A part of what was added was that a wife should “submit graciously to the servant leadership of the husband”. After all the publicity about that, a Gallop Poll showed that 69% of those polled disagreed with that addition. A few days after the revision of the statement of faith, there was a cartoon in Newsweek Magazine depicting a cave man holding a club in one hand and dragging his wife by the hair with his other hand. An onlooker commented to his friend, “Must be a Southern Baptist”. That in a nutshell is how our culture views a Biblical worldview of the family.

The word “submit” literally means to line up under authority. It was primarily a military word. Just as a lesser ranking soldier is not inferior to the one over him, even so the wife is not inferior to her husband. We even see submission within the Godhead. The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God is one and the three persons of the one God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are co-equal. Yet the Holy Spirit submits to the Son and the Son submits to the Father. Order in all of society is dependent upon submission to God-ordained authority. The alternative is anarchy! God likes order. In His creation is ordered; there is order in His plan for government; there is order in His church, and there is order in the family. God placed the husband as the leader and told the wife to voluntarily put herself under her husband’s leadership. Submission is not about equality. The Bible speaks to equality before God in **Galatians 3:28 (NKJV)** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” In other words, just as Jews and Gentiles stand equal before God, just as slaves and free stand equal before God, even so men and women are equal. Submission is not about worth. **Proverbs 31:10 (NKJV)** “Who can find a virtuous wife? For her **worth** is far above rubies.” Submission is not about gifts or abilities. A woman’s submission does not apply to all men, only husbands. Submission is not without limits. A wife does not submit to her husband’s demand for her to violate a direct command of God. There is never going to be an ideal situation where submission is easy and without challenge, but this is God’s order and if it is violated, the family suffers.

2. Husbands Love

Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV) “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her”. **Colossians 3:19 (ESV)** “Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.” Tony Evans shows how most men miss what this love is all about: “Most men date in order to marry, when the biblical principle is marry in order to date. Most men shower a woman with love to get her to say ‘I do’. But the Biblical ideal is to have her say ‘I do’, so we can spend the rest of our lives showering her with love” [Tony Evans, “What a Way to Live”, Page 204]. This love is not primarily emotional though it certainly involves the emotions. We are given a picture of what this love looks like in the daily grind of married life in **1 Peter 3:7 (NKJV)** “Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” Here is what a husband’s love to his wife looks like. First, he spends time with her (“Husbands, likewise dwell with them”). The word dwell means to make a home with. It speaks of sharing your life with her. That involves communicating and sharing what’s going on in your life. Second, loving your wife means that you study her so that you can “dwell with [her] with understanding”. That means you learn what she likes and doesn’t like, her strengths and weaknesses, her expectations, her areas that need your patience until God changes her, etc. Third, you love your wife by honoring her. The word honor means to give respect to, to consider as weighty, and valuing her opinions, wisdom, insights. Fourth, loving your wife means that you protect her (“as to the weaker vessel”). God is the one the wife must ultimately look to, but the channel God often uses to give her victory over fear is her husband. Fifth,

do things together (“being heirs together of the grace of life”). That means that you share in her delights even if its something like bird watching or shopping for antiques. That kind of love pleases God and removes hindrances to your prayers being answered. In the context that seems to be prayers for God to change her.

The first particular of the family is the roles in marriage.

B. The Responsibility of Parents

There was a time when parents were helped in their task by culture. Those days are almost gone. Moral instruction in the public educational system has largely been legislated away and ruled out of bounds by warped legal decisions in the courts. Godly public school teachers often have their hands tied. There was a tight knit neighborhood where parents helped one another with what was going on in the children’s lives (I couldn’t get by with anything as a kid because someone would see me and tell my parents). Those days are pretty much gone. The parents today carry a heavier load today than ever before in history. The responsibility of parents under a biblical worldview is two-fold.

1. Train Your Children

Training includes teaching, but it also involves discipline to see that the teaching is followed. Teaching without discipline is not very effective with most children. It is not the responsibility of the church, the school or any other institution to train your child. It is the parent’s responsibility. The school and church can help but the responsibility falls squarely on the shoulder of the parents. What are the areas that we are to train them in? A good outline is the four categories that Jesus grew in. **Luke 2:52 (NKJV)** “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” **Wisdom** is seeing life from God’s perspective. Train your children in understanding God’s perspective of their purpose for existence, what is right and wrong, what it means to be a sinner and God’s plan for reconciling sinners to Himself, the value of work, and really all that we’re covering in a Biblical worldview. **Stature** is their physical life. Train them concerning their bodies, physical fitness, nutrition, and how their body is a vessel dedicated to God’s glory (**Philippians 1:20b (NKJV)** “...now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death”). **Favor with God** involves training them about salvation and then how to please God through obedience and moment by moment trust. **Favor with man** involves social skills such as manners, true masculinity, true femininity, respect for authority, compassion toward the hurting, and so many other social skills. Remember, it is not just sharing facts; it is working in through repeated instruction, rewards for applying what they have been taught, and age appropriate discipline when they ignore instruction.

2. Model for Your Children

Remember the concept of the home being a laboratory? They need not only to be instructed in wisdom, physical matters, pleasing God and social skills; they need to see it modeled in their parents’ lives. If you teach them what you don’t practice, it often leads to bitterness and hardness of heart on the part of the children.

C. The Resolve of Singles

I realize that it seems that I have pretty much left out singles, but actually the Biblical worldview for singles in relation to the family is easy to explain, but certainly requires the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out. Singles must resolve two things:

1. Be Content being Single

Philippians 4:11b (ESV) “...I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.” When a single adult hinges future contentment on finding a spouse, they are opening themselves up for a crummy, discontented now and a disastrous marriage. There are many advantages to being single. Don’t always focus on what you’re missing. All too often marriage is like flies on a screen door. There are flies on the inside wanting out and flies on the outside wanting in. Enjoy the blessings of being single. 1 Corinthians 7:32-33 gives us the advantage that singles have of having more time and resources for the kingdom. Many of the greatest missionaries were single (Lottie Moon, Amy Carmichael, David Brainerd, William Borden, and so many more).

2. Look to the Lord to Meet Your Needs

Colossians 2:10a (NKJV) “and you are complete in Him...” The desire for companionship and marital relations is not wrong. I don’t want to be trite, but God is sufficient to give you grace to say no to satisfying a legitimate desire in an illegitimate way. He will draw close in your loneliness and be to you a friend that sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).

CONCLUSION

When families live out a Biblical worldview, here is the result. First, the world sees in a Christian marriage a beautiful picture of Christ and the church. I believe that is the primary purpose of marriage in fact. That also explains why God so hates divorce. To break a covenant is the opposite of Christ’s unending commitment to His church. Second, the children of a home with a Biblical worldview are sent out into the world as polished straight arrows to accomplish the work that God has given them to do. That seeing the children as arrows is the symbolism used in **Psalms 127:4 (NKJV)** “Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so *are* the children of one’s youth.” Third, when the world sees a content single involved in the work of the Kingdom, they see a living demonstration of God’s sufficiency. God’s reputation in the world depends largely on whether or not Christians have a Biblical worldview of the family. (3468)