

# Family Heritage Developer

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*"God forbid that I should forsake the inheritance of my fathers" -- 1 Kings 21:3*

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## Family Duty, Part 3

By John Bunyan (1628-1688)

### THE DUTY OF WIVES

But passing the master of the family, I will speak a word or two to those that are under him. And, first, to the wife: The wife is bound by the law to her husband, so long as her husband lives (Rom. 7:2). Therefore she also has her work and place in the family, as well as the rest. Now there are these things considered in the carriage of a wife toward her husband, which she should conscientiously observe.

First, That she look upon him as her head and lord. 'The head of the woman is the man' (1 Cor. 11:3). And so Sarah called Abraham lord (1 Peter 3:6).

Second, She should therefore be subject to him, as is fit in the Lord. The apostle says, 'That the wife should submit herself to her husband, as to the Lord' (1 Peter 3:1; Col. 3:18; Eph. 5:22). I told you before, that if the husband does walk towards his wife as is fitting to him, he will therein be such an ordinance

of God to her, besides the relation of a husband, that will preach to her the behavior of Christ to his church. And now I say also, that the wife, if she walk with her husband as is fitting to her, she shall preach the obedience of the church to her husband. 'Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything' (Eph. 5:24). Now for your performing of this work, you must first shun these evils.

1. The evil of a wandering and a gossiping spirit; this is evil in the church, and is evil also in a wife, who is the figure of a church. Christ loves to have his spouse keep at home; that is, to be with him in the faith and practice of his things, not ranging and meddling with the things of Satan; no more should wives be given to wander and gossip abroad. You know that Proverbs 7:11 says, 'She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house.' Wives should be about their own husbands' business at

home; as the apostle says, Let them 'be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands.' And why? Because otherwise 'the word of God will be blasphemed.' (Titus 2:5)

2. Take heed of an idle, talking, or contentious tongue. This also is odious, either in maids or wives, to be like parrots, not bridling their tongue; whereas the wife should know, as I said before, that her husband is her lord, and is over her, as Christ is over the church. Do you think it is seemly for the church to parrot it against her husband? Is she not to be silent before him, and to look to his laws, rather than her own fictions? Why so, says the apostle, should the wife so carry it towards her husband? 'Let the woman,' says Paul, 'learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence' (1 Tim. 2:11-12) It is an unseemly thing to see a woman so much as once in

all her lifetime to offer to overtop her husband; she should in everything be in subjection to him, and to do all she does, as having her warrant, license, and authority from him. And indeed here is her glory, even to be under him, as the church is under Christ: Now 'she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness' (Prov. 31:26).

3. Do not wear immodest apparel, or walk in a seductive way; this will be evil both abroad and at home; abroad, it will not only give ill example, but also tend to tempt to lust and lasciviousness; and at home it will give an offence to a godly husband, and be infecting to ungodly children, etc. Therefore, as says the apostle, Let women's apparel be modest, as becomes women professing godliness, with good works, 'not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array' (1 Tim. 2:9-10). And as it is said again, 'Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands' (1 Peter 3:3-5).

But yet, do not think that by the subjection I have here mentioned, that I do intend women should be their husbands' slaves. Women are their husbands' yoke-fellows, their flesh and their bones; and he is not a man that hates his own flesh, or that is bitter against it (Eph. 5:29). Wherefore, let every man 'love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband' (Eph. 5:33). The wife is master next her husband, and is to rule all in his absence; yes, in his presence she is to guide the house, to bring up the children, provided she does it, as the adversary has no occasion to speak reproachfully (1 Tim. 5:10,13). 'Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. A gracious woman retaineth honour:' and guides her affairs with discretion (Prov 31:10; 11:16; 12:4).

Objection: But my husband is an unbeliever; what shall I do?

Answer: If so, then what I have said before lies upon you with an engagement so much the stronger. For, 1. Your husband being in this condition, he will be watchful to take your slips and infirmities, to throw them as dirt in the face of God and your Savior. 2. He will be apt to make the worst of every one of your words, actions, and gestures. 3. And all this does tend to the possessing his heart with more hardness, prejudice, and opposition to his own salvation; therefore,

as Peter says, 'ye wives, be in subjection to your husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they may also without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear' (1 Peter 3:1-2). Your husband's salvation or damnation lies much in your good behavior before him; therefore, if there is in you any fear of God, or love to your husband, seek, by behavior full of meekness, modesty, and holiness, and a humbleness before him, to win him to the love of his own salvation; and by doing this, how 'knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?' (1 Cor. 7:16).

Objection: But my husband is not only an unbeliever, but one very contentious, peevish, and testy, yes, so contentious, etc., that I know not how to speak to him, or behave myself before him.

Answer: Indeed there are some wives in great slavery by reason of their ungodly husbands; and as such should be pitied, and prayed for; so they should be so much the more watchful and circumspect in all their ways.

1. Therefore be very faithful to him in all the things of this life.
2. Bear with patience his unruly and unconverted behavior; you are alive, he is dead; you are principled with grace, he with sin. Now, then, seeing grace is stronger than sin, and virtue than vice; be

not overcome with his vileness, but overcome that with your virtues (Rom 12:21). It is a shame for those that are gracious to be as lavishing in their words, etc., as those that are graceless: They that are 'slow to wrath are of great understanding; but they that are hasty of spirit, exalteth folly' (Prov. 14:29).

3. Your wisdom, therefore, if at any time you have a desire to speak to your husband for his conviction, concerning anything, either good or evil, it is to observe convenient times and seasons: There is 'a time to keep silence, and a time to speak' (Eccl. 3:7). Now for the right timing of your intentions,

(1.) Consider his disposition; and take him when he is farthest off of those filthy passions that are your afflictions. Abigail would not speak a word to her churlish husband till his wine was gone from him, and he in a sober temper (1 Sam. 25:36, 37). Not heeding this observation is the cause why so much is spoken, and so little effected.

(2.) Take him at those times when he has his heart taken with you, and when he shows tokens of love and delight in you. Thus did Esther with the king her husband, and prevailed (Esther 5:3, 6; 7:1, 2).

(3.) Observe when convictions seize his conscience, and then follow them with sound and grave sayings of the Scriptures.

Somewhat like to this dealt Manoah's wife with her husband (Judges 13:22, 23). Yet then,

(a) Let your words be few.

(b) And none of them savoring of a lording it over him; but speak still as to your head and lord, by way of entreaty and beseeching.

(c) And that in such a spirit of sympathy, and a heart of affection after his good, that the manner of your speech and behavior in speaking may be to him an argument that you speak in love, as being sensible of his misery, and inflamed in your soul with desire after his conversion.

(d) And follow your words and behavior with prayers to God for his soul.

(e) Still keeping yourself in a holy, chaste, and modest behavior before him.

Objection: But my husband is stupid, a fool, and one that has not wit enough to follow his outward employment in the world.

Answer:

1. Though all this be true, yet you must know he is your head, your lord, and your husband.

2. Therefore you must take heed of desiring to usurp authority over him. He was not made for you; that is, for you to have dominion over him, but to be your husband, and to rule over you (1 Tim. 2:10; 1 Cor. 11:3, 8).

3. Therefore, though in truth you may have more

discretion than he, yet you should know that you, and all that is yours, is to be used as under your husband; even 'every thing' (Eph 5:24). Take heed therefore, that what you do goes not in your name, but his; not to your exaltation, but his; doing all things so that by your dexterity and prudence, not one of your husband's weaknesses is discovered to others by you: 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed, is as rottenness in his bones.' For then, as the wise man says, 'she will do him good and not evil, all the days of her life' (Prov. 12:4; 31:12).

4. Therefore act, and do still, as being under the power and authority of your husband. Now touching your behavior toward your children and servants. You are a parent, and a mistress, and so you should demean yourself. And besides, seeing the believing woman is a figure of the church, she should, as the church, nourish and instruct her children, and servants, as the church, that she may answer in that particular also; and truly, the wife being always at home, she has great advantage that way; therefore do it, and the Lord prosper your proceeding.

...to be continued

*"Duties of Parents to Children" will be the next section of Bunyan's work to be re-printed...*

# Becky's Tips

## **In God We Trust**

Do you find it easier to trust and praise God when things go exactly as you wish? I do, too.

A covenant study that I was in has really helped me see the folly of that line of thinking. Because my God is a covenant God, I can trust that in all things He is my protector, vindicator, wound bearer, friend, power and all in all. In this strength giving position I can picture myself robed in His righteousness regardless of circumstances.

How does this apply to homeschooling?

Some examples:

- When a child refuses your training, picture Christ standing with you, receiving the wounds and serving as protector.
- As you make choices of what materials to use for next year picture yourself robed in Christ, fully empowered to make a decision.
- As you struggle with schedule consider that your Covenant God is cheering you to victory.

## **Self-Image**

At many workshops we have discussed how to help your child have a Biblical self-image.

Consider these comments:

- Randy Alcorn from twitter "We become more Christ like only when we focus our gaze on Christ" Read IICor. 3:18
- Ray Ortland on twitter, "I have never exalted myself and thought, 'That felt good!' I have never exalted Jesus and thought, 'How disappointing.'"

- Kevin DeYoung on twitter when defining boredom: "self being stuffed with self."

When reading these I was encouraged to have us keep our focus on:

- Who am I? The wretched one.
- Who is Christ? The wretched one's Redeemer, giving that wretched one great worth and inestimable value.

## **Evaluating**

It's that time of year when a few answers may help you look ahead to where there are teaching needs:

I'll suggest the questions.

You supply the answers.

- How do I show my child that his minutes are valuable?
- What evidence(s) could my child list for how I submit to my husband?
- As you and your child discuss his progress what clues could either (both) of you give that the child honors you?
- Is the student's attitude toward each academic area reflecting that he is grasping that there is only one Creator, Sustainer, Revealer, Redeemer?
- Does your student give evidence of understanding God's plan for family as he responds to both chores, academics and extra-curricular activities?

## **Simplify**

From a Biblical perspective how do you define the Christian walk? Everyone I talk to, everything I read seems to be whispering to me, "Simplify." I am asking for your help in this.

- To best show the way of Christ, what would we collect?

- If our focus is eternal, how many closets do I need to fill?
- Have I simplified enough if all my stuff is in order?
- If I want it and can afford it, am I free to get it?
- Do I measure my heart, my stuff, both, neither?

As we have opportunity for small groups, phone visits or workshop roundtable I trust that you will consider my thoughts and needs.

## **School All Summer**

Please realize that the very beautiful picture of homeschooling is that you are free to train 24/7, 12 months of the year.

Consider using these activities during the summer for training.

- Read aloud. From great books that you read together choose a phrase or an idea to illustrate, talk about putting into practice or deciding if it follows Biblical guidelines.
- Gardening, feasting, canning. Could you accomplish more than "getting it done?" Since you're together, why not challenge one another? Perhaps ask, "Why do we have so much and some are hungry?" OR "Do you think this could be a profitable business?" Why not?
- Each family member choose a Bible verse. Write it on a 3X5 card. Place the cards in the center of the table. Read them together every time you have a dessert.

*Love,*

*Becky*

