

A Father's Checkup

1. On a scale of one to ten (ten being the best), how are you doing at knowing God, keeping a relationship with Him, and reading and studying his Word. How might a member of your family rate you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. In Deuteronomy 6 there is the command (backed up in the NT) that we impress upon our children the things of the Lord. List out three NEW ways you might be able to do this with your children/grandchildren/family.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
3. Considering how Jesus disciplined his followers, how might you emulate his purposes, methods, and teaching content. This is a big question that we ought to consider for some time.
4. Consider the times that you might have *exasperated* or *embittered* your children. When did this happen? Why did it happen? How can you avoid this as God desires us to do?

The Family Before God, Part 1 Men as Husbands and Fathers

Pastor Rick McNally, February 2009
South Side Bible Church



Some Initial Thoughts

It is my goal over the next three weeks to lay forth a Biblical understanding of family, family purpose, and family roles for us to consider and follow. I know I am not speaking into a vacuum, and that many of you have *deeply* considered these issues on your own, and many of you are *wonderful* examples of many of these things. However, I am convinced that no one is perfect, and that we need to put forth expectations (not SSBC expectations, but God's expectations) as presented in the Word of God for our community and children.

This series is not about "*what Pastor Rick thinks*" rather, I would have it be completely about what God desires. Once we know and understand the desire of God we can move beyond feel good ideas (some of which are good ideas) and psycho-babble (some of which are helpful) and find the heart of the matter.

The Man as Husband

Without digging too far into

scripture I know where this journey is going to end; with words and *concepts* like love, respect, train, honor and obey.

Each of these words have been in some way or another hijacked by popular culture and have been misunderstood. In our men's study a few Tuesdays ago the author suggested that we [as Christian men] have an oversight role in our wives lives, overseeing things such as her spiritual life, her relationships, her ministries, etc. I immediately thought of how our culture would view that, and came to the conclusion that through the lens of current thinking that would sound chauvinistic, controlling, etc. Now, the apathy and relational disjointedness of uninvolved husbands is heralded

as freedom, and men ought to — I guess — be unaware of our wives lives.

The greatest operative word in this study is *love*. Love is another one of these concepts that people do not fully understand. Biblical love is so much bigger than a fuzzy feeling, a passionate selfish urge, or any other modern equivalent.

When I start to get my arms around the concept of love — true love — I feel very inadequate. Inadequate in that I realize that love does not originate with me, and I cannot well up within myself the love God wants me to demonstrate (consider that love is a fruit of the Spirit, not a characteristic of the flesh).

True love always seeks the best for others, always gives of self for the benefit of others. True love is never self seeking, never keeps a record of wrongs. It does not boast. It delights in what is true. It is infinitely patient. It is not rude. It always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1 Cor 13).

Such is the love that God desires us to show as men and fathers. Such is the behavior of our God toward us; The Father of us all, and His Son Jesus as one day the spiritual bridegroom of the church. It was his love that put into motion the plan Gospel which is encompassed throughout all of the narrative of Scripture. It was God's love by which he formed us, it was God's love

by which he passed judgment. It was God's love that reached out to us through the Law, through the prophets, through the Psalms.

God was truly the Father crying in the wilderness, speaking to us words of wisdom, longing for us to trust him, to love him again. God was the lover wooing us back to himself even though we found other loves (which could never satisfy us). God did these

²⁵Husbands, *love your wives*, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to *love* their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. ³²This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must *love* his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:25-33

A Husband's Checkup

1. On a scale of one to ten, how are you doing at pursuing your wife as you ought. The Hebrew word *to cleave* means to follow and pursue, not just marry. It is our responsibility to continue the pursuit of our wives.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. Husbands (or young men who desire to be a husband one day) write down an overall goal for being a husband and some biblical texts to show that that goal is Biblical.

3. List three ways you can love your wife as described in Ephesians 5:25-33. How can these things become part of your daily/weekly experience?

- A.
- B.
- C.

4. In 1 Peter 3:7 there are two words that describe the way husbands ought to treat their wives. List those two words and write down how these Biblical requirements might mature the way you treat your wife today, and how tomorrow might be different.



just covered. The first is the command to not exasperate our children.

It is my experience that “exasperating” our children comes oh so very easily, and the clear headed disciplinarian is a very rare being. Fathers, this needs to be our goal. God help us be patient with our children, giv-

⁴Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. **Ephesians 6:4**

ing them the grace that God has given us, showing them the love and respect they are due.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. **Colossians 3:20-21**

things because he wanted our best. He understood our need for Him, for we were created for a relationship with Him. It is our nature to run away and scorn that relationship — that is as good a definition for sin as any I can think of.

He initiated conversation. **He** initiated communication. **He** initiated making things right. As scripture states; “This is love: that that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Thus God himself is our ultimate model, for us who are blessed with the task of being husbands and fathers. Our goal is perfection and maturity as fathers, with the understanding that we will fail built-in, not as an excuse for wrongness, but as a necessary grace for our fallen-ness.

In our discussion on marriage the key passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians (see left) should be at the forefront of our minds. Here, through the inspiration of Scripture God lets us in on his intentions in marriage. Here we see his heart for this union he instituted.

I look back to April 20, 1991 and I see the twenty-five year old “man” standing in the front of the church waiting for his bride, and I wonder what he was thinking. He did not know what he was getting into. I mean that not in then sense that you might think, I mean that he did not have a decent clue what kind of vow he was taking; what

kind of responsibility he was volunteering to undergo. Would he, before God, live up to the kind of LOVE that Ephesians 5 requires. Did he enter into this sacred event thinking only of the wonder of companionship (considering with more weight the “lesser loves” such as *philadelphos* and *eros*, and not understanding *agape*).

Thrice in this passage we are commanded to love our wives — and while there is a good and holy place for the *brotherly kind of love* and *sexual love* (see 1 Cor 7 for example), this is not Paul’s focus. Our love ought to take a certain form, and that form was the pattern of Christ Jesus. What is our love supposed to look like?

- Our love is to look like the sacrifice of Christ who on the Cross gave everything so we could be made right with God. Our love thus ought to be selfless, making our wives more mature and complete, cleaning them through the word.
- Our love is to be the love of a steward. Our wives are not ultimately ours, they are Christ’s. We are to care for them and one day present them to God. We are not the focus, rather God is the focus.
- Our love is to reflect the love we have for our own selves. We feed and clothe and take care of ourselves. We ought to seek to fulfill their daily needs, not just our own.
- Our love ought to recognize

that our wives are one with us. When we hurt them (even through neglect) we hurt ourselves. When we help them, we help ourselves.

- Our love ought to be such a love that is easy to respect. This is their duty, but it helps if we are *respectable*.

Beyond this passage I would like to brush up against two other passages.

The first is from 1 Peter 3:7.

⁷Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. **1 Peter 3:7**

Here the concepts of consideration and respect are mentioned, and they are tied to another idea which is expressed in Jesus teaching as well: our relationships one to another affect our relationship with God. If we fail in them, sometimes that has a disastrous affect in our relationship with God. This is humbling.

Consideration — knowledge. We are to know them. Not the easiest of tasks and one I must admit to some level of failure.

Respect — honoring, valuing. We need to truly see our wives as the benefit they are, and not take them for granted.

Another passage to look to is Colossians 3:19.

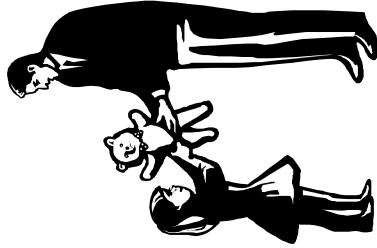
¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. **Colossians 3:19**

In this passage the idea of harshness is not in violence, but rather the Greek term has the idea of “making bitter.” Our actions and words should not sow bitterness but love.

The Man as Father

The heart of God for the family is clearly seen in the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy. God’s heart for children is clearly seen in this passage, particularly on what a child ought to receive from a father.

First and foremost on God’s heart is that each father has the Word “upon our hearts” (verse 6). If this is not the case we will never be able to impress them on our children (verse 7). This



means that each of us men as fathers has a responsibility to know God and know his Word. It is for our children that we take the time

¹These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ²so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you.

⁴Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. **Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

to reach maturity in the Word ourselves. We need to drink deep from the well of life so that we might be able to have the strength and knowledge to draw some water for our children.

Secondarily is the requirement of God for Fathers to impress the Word of God on our family. Look at the list of ways in which the men of Israel were to do this, in sitting, in walking, on the road, lying down, getting up. They were to be constantly speaking of the things of God, impressing upon them the things of God.

The New Testament offers us first and foremost Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Law, and the passage to the right. It was Jesus who fulfilled fully the heart of this passage, it was he who loved his Father with all his heart, soul and strength. It was he who took the truth and bore them on his heart, and spoke to his disciples, impressing truth the way it was meant to be impressed.

As Christian fathers we need to place Jesus as our master, and learn from as disciples must. We are all but children before him, though he deigns to call us brothers.

I would like to consider the passage in Ephesians 6:4. Here Paul gives us a “do not” and a “do.”

Unfortunately neither of these is a slam dunk. I think the second is a NT reaffirmation of the Deuteronomy passage, which we have