

Spheres of Authority

The Authority and Responsibility of the Family

Selected Scriptures

1. **The _____ of the Family**

The family, namely the marriage of one man and one woman, is the initial societal structure which the Lord created (Gen. 1:26-28). The family unit is primarily to be understood in terms of the lifelong monogamous heterosexual marriage of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:22-24; Matt. 19:1-9) and the children who are born from their union. The extended family of blood relatives can include multiple generations and multiple married units (Prov. 17:6; 1 Tim. 5:3; cf. Lev. 18:6ff).

2. **The _____ of the Family**

The core structure of the family is the husband and wife who are to make this new union their primary family connection over against the one into which they were born (Gen. 2:24; Mark 10:7,8). God has given the husband the role of leadership and therefore of ultimate accountability in the home (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph 5:23). He is to lovingly lead and serve his own wife while the wife is to submit and to love her own husband (Eph 5:22ff; Col. 3:18ff). The children are to submit to both parents (Eph 6:1-3; Col. 3:20) when they are young (cf. Luke 2:51), and to continue to show honor to their parents when they are older and, likely, married (Ex. 20:12).

3. **Delegated _____ of the Family**

There are a few specific and vitally important areas of authority and responsibility which God has delegated to the family.

A. _____ Intimacy

The monogamous heterosexual marriage is the only context where God has commanded, and therefore approve of, sexual intercourse (Gen. 1:28). Any sexual activity which deviates from being expressed between marriage partners is sinful (Ex. 20:14). Husbands and wives have a mutual obligation in this area (1 Cor. 7:1ff), and it is to be honored and guarded (cf. Heb. 13:4).

B. _____ Children

God has commissioned parents to instruct their children in how to honor and follow Him (Prov. 22:6; cf. Ps. 119:9). This teaching is to be the general pattern of life as children learn other things from their parents (cf. Deut. 4:10; 6:7; 11:19). Similarly, children have the responsibility to learn and to be wise (cf.

Prov. 1:8; 3:1; 6:20; 24:21). Educational institutions and Christian ministries (e.g. Sunday school) may be used to assist parents in the training of children (cf. Matt. 4:19; Gal. 4:1-2), but the responsibility for their instruction ultimately resides with the parents alone.

C. _____ Children

Correction is a natural part of the teaching process. Fathers are to be careful not to exasperate their children or to cause them to lose heart as they teach and correct them (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). God has commended the use of a controlled corporal discipline where it is called for in order to assist in the correction of children (Deut. 23:13; 29:15 Prov. 13:24; 22:15).

D. _____ provision

God gave man the task of working before sin came into the world (Gen. 1:28; 2:15), and the husband is ultimately responsible for working so as to provide for the material needs of his wife (cf. Ex. 21:10-11) and children. A man is not to be derelict in his duty to provide so as to rely upon others to provide for his basic needs (cf. 2 Thess. 3:10). He is commended to work diligently so as to leave an inheritance for his children (Prov. 13:22). But he is also responsible to assist in caring for his own parents elderly parents (cf. Mark 7:11-13) or widowed close relative (cf. 1 Tim. 5:3).