

God's Leading of His Family

By Lynn Warner

God instituted marriage and family. The relationship between a man and a woman in marriage illustrates the relationship between Christ and His Church, as we read in Ephesians 5:25-32: *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

In this article, I am mainly addressing the father (husband) because of the parallels between the father of a family and the Father of Jesus Christ and the Church.

The father of a family begets children – he feeds, supports, and gives paternal care to them. The household must be managed—to manage and lead is “to direct and employ in the best manner for the best effect.” “To husband” also means to “direct and manage (originally it meant to farm – a farmer).” Management involves organizing, so that the parts may act together as one; it is to arrange parts in the best manner for use or service (definitions from Noah Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language).

The father must decide how to manage the household for the best outcome. But how does he decide what constitutes “the best outcome”? His children have physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, and must be supported, nurtured, and taught. What is God’s “best outcome” for His family? Let’s read Ephesians 2:18-22: *"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."* So God’s desire is for His children to be of the household of God through His Spirit, built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. We are to be built as a family is built.

What are God’s methods of management to obtain a people with this description? Let’s turn to Ephesians 3:14-19: *"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from Whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."*

From this Scripture, we learn that God strengthens His children with might by His Spirit in the inner man. What is God’s purpose of this strength with might by His Spirit? It is BEING GROUNDED AND ROOTED IN HIS LOVE! It is to be so rooted and grounded in His love that His children may know the love of Christ and be filled with all the fullness of God. God describes His love further in Ephesians 4:1-6: *"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you*

that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

God gives many gifts to His children to nurture and nourish them, to encourage growth, to protect and aid, to teach and attend. In Ephesians 4:11-16, we read: *"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*

We have read of God's strengthening with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith and that we may be rooted and grounded in love, that we may be filled with the fullness of God. Ephesians 5 describes ways God's love inspires, motivates, and enables Godly behaviors and relationships. But we don't just behave differently, we are different – we are a new creation of God! In Ephesians 5:23-24, we read: *"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."*

All these teachings are in direct contrast to the chaos, oppression, contradictions, and brokenness that the enemy (satan) works in the "sons of disobedience," through fear, false guilt/shame, and force. Satan teaches a false "love," which uses "tolerance" and "acceptance" of sinful, harmful behavior with lies and deceptions. Many have had fathers and families that were in the worldly system. They were mismanaged and broken, which harmed and discouraged their members and reaped bitterness and rebellion.

But God is the true Heavenly Father of all who belong to Him through Jesus Christ. He renews His children in the spirit of their minds and creates a "new man," which *"after God is created in righteousness and true Holiness"* (Ephesians 4:23-24). We are to *"put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts"* (Ephesians 4:22). We are *"no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God"* (Ephesians 2:19). We are adopted into God's household under His authority, management, order, stability, peace, and truth – motivated and empowered by His love. So, let us as brothers and sisters in Christ encourage and strengthen one another, following Jesus' lead, staying in His love and yielding to Him so that the peaceable fruit of righteousness will grow!