

A DISTURBING TREND, Part 2 of 2

To have a healthy church you must have a healthy family. The importance of the family is stressed all through Scripture. God began His instructions with the nation of Israel in Exodus 20:12: “Honor thy father and mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”

God is serious about the family. He wants order and respect in the family. This is serious stuff, so serious, that God said in Exodus 21 and verse 15: “And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.” In verse 17 of the same chapter He said, “And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

God wants the family to function as a unit. In the Old Testament economy, to hit one's father or mother, or, to curse one's father or mother meant death to the child. God is serious about the responsibility of family members to each other. We must learn that God holds each member of the family responsible for their actions. The family must be healthy before the church can be healthy.

The writer of Proverbs 30:11-17 spoke to his generation, as well as to our generation in the twenty-first century. He noted that there was a generation of evil men that were disrespectful, hypocrites, proud, greedy, and never satisfied.

The text reads like some modern day books that are written on dysfunctional families: “*There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men. The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough. The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough. The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagle shall eat it*” (Proverbs 30:11-17).

Christians have an obligation to their families. A strong Christian family should be a high priority. And there is a high price to pay if we don't make that a priority.

Paul wrote in respect to the same issue that is taught in the Old Testament. He taught the same principles to the church in Ephesus: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of god.” “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own

husbands, as unto the Lord.” “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (cf. Ephesians 5:21-6:4).

We must strive to develop solid families. And in doing so, we develop a healthy church environment. Each member of the family has an obligation before God to make the family all that God intended it to be. And any church, or person, that practices otherwise in is violation of God’s Word!

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