

When the Apostle Paul was giving his instructions to Christian families in his letter to the Ephesians, he had this to say to fathers: “*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4 [RSV]). Nothing is so important for fathers to do than to follow this command to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and to do so takes work. It means we will have to engage ourselves in knowing what God’s will is, which means we must study, learn and apply God’s will in our lives so that we can teach it to our children. In other words, it is going to take effort.

The role of men, particularly here in 21<sup>st</sup> century America, has been downplayed to a great extent. This is very unfortunate, for God’s word makes it quite clear that men and fathers are to be the spiritual leaders of their homes. In fact, the relationship God expects between husbands and wives is compared to that of Christ and the church, which is His bride. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:22-33 [RSV],

*22. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. 23. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. 24. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.*

*25. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26. that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27. that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.*

*28. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, 30. because we are members of His body. 31. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32. This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church; 33. however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

God has always wanted His people to study and meditate upon His word. God told Joshua following the death of Moses in Joshua 1:8 [RSV], “*This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.*”

May the Lord bless all the godly men who are seeking to be the spiritual heads of their families!