

Lesson 1

The material I am going to share with you came about as a result of a series of Sunday School lessons in the book of Ephesians. When I got to chapter 5, I realized that there was a lot more here than I had previously observed. In this chapter, beginning at verse 22, you will find a section on the relationship between husband and wife as compared to that of Christ and the church. While there is plenty here that could be addressed to women, my main emphasis is toward the men – the husbands and fathers.

The passage we are going to study reads as follows:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.* ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 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.” ³²This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.1

Section 1: Covenantal Headship

Since we are talking primarily to men in this study, let’s consider verse 23. **²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.**

Usually when a man realizes that he is the head of the wife, he interprets this as being the boss or dictator over his wife. He often sees himself as being superior in some way. However, this is not the meaning we should come away with.

Look at I Cor 11:3 **But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.2**

According to this verse, list the order of headship beginning with God:

God → _____ → _____ → _____

1The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

2The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

Since God is the head of Christ, does that mean God is superior to Christ or the dictator of Christ?

I'm not suggesting that the responsibility to submit to the head is not spoken about. Christ said that he always did those things that pleased the father. Our passage says that as the church is subject to Christ, so the wife is to be subject to her husband. So, I am not minimizing the importance of submitting, but I am saying that headship implies so much more than what the typical man understands when he thinks of the term.

Another way that the headship of Christ is described is that Christ is the head of the church.

How did Christ get to be the head of the church? Eph 1:22

Headship has to do with roles and order. It has to do with authority and responsibility. In discussing headcoverings in I Cor 11:10, Paul says that the covering is the symbol of the authority under which the woman lives.

I like to think of man's headship as being a **covenantal headship**. By that I mean that the covenantal head has the authority and bears the responsibility for those he represents. Those under him are thought of as being "in him".

We find that Levi who hadn't been born yet when Abraham met Melchizedek, paid tithes to Melchizedek because he was "in him".

Hebrews 7:9, 10 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, ¹⁰for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

This kind of covenantal relationship is seen in the position Adam had as the head of the human race.

In Romans 5: 18, 19 we have the following

Therefore, **as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation**, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹**For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners**, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

We see the same thing in I Cor. 15:22 For as in Adam all die.

Adam is pictured as the head of the race and those in him are judged guilty based on his sin.

Look back at the Romans 5 passage and the I Cor. 15 passage to see that Christ also is a representative or covenantal head. Think through what an important aspect of our salvation this is.

In a way similar to the examples already discussed, you who are husbands and fathers are the covenantal head of your family. You are the responsible party. Your family stands or falls in

you. Under God, you answer for the family. Every aspect of family life is your responsibility – financial, educational, spiritual.

Questions to Ponder:

1. Can you think of other situations in life where one person represents others and his/her decision binds others?
2. Some people have difficulty with the fact that Adam's sin is imputed to us. If the concept of imputation was rejected, what are the implications this would have on salvation?
3. If the wife were in charge of keeping the family finances in order and a mistake was made that caused serious financial consequences, how do you think the wife would feel if the husband took this concept of covenantal headship seriously and took the blame and responsibility for the problem?
4. What quality or characteristic of man did God consider when He made him head?

Lesson 2

Look at the law related to vows in Numbers 30: 1-8

¹Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, “*This is the thing which the LORD has commanded:*” ²“If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

³“Or if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds *herself* by some agreement while in her father’s house in her youth, ⁴“and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. ⁵“But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will release her, because her father overruled her.

⁶“If indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, ⁷“and her husband hears *it*, and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself shall stand. ⁸“But if her husband overrules her on the day that he hears *it*, he shall make void her vow which she took and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and the LORD will release her.

What is God’s attitude toward vow-keeping? Ecc 5:5

According to the Numbers 30 passage, In what way is a daughter held accountable for a vow she makes if she doesn’t keep it because her father overrules her?

In what way is a wife held accountable for a vow she makes if she doesn’t keep it because her husband overrules her?

The husband’s role as covenantal head is to do dominion work, provide for his family and protect his family.

Dominion Work – God told us in the Garden that we are to have dominion or rulership over His creation.

²⁶Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

²⁸Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

¹⁵Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

I believe that the work we do as men falls under the category of dominion work. We have a responsibility of tending and caring for God's creation and having dominion over it. This shows itself in all the many decent occupations that we may be involved in.

Provision -- God also calls us to provide for our families. I Timothy 5:8 says, ⁸But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

This means that as a young man grows up in his home he must be taught that he will someday need to provide for his family. In order to do that in today's culture, he must either be educated or trained in some endeavor that will allow him to provide adequately for his family. It is not right to allow him to grow up through his teen years especially and not be setting any goals in front of him that will challenge him to learn and develop skills that will provide for his family in the future.

When I was teaching this in Sunday School, the question was raised as to whether that was minimizing the possibility that God would call him into the ministry or missionary service. Such service may not look like there will be enough money to supply the needs of the family. I don't think that this discussion is saying that a person should not be open to God's call to the ministry. God will supply all needs in this case. God has promised to supply all needs whether in the ministry or not, but my point is that if a young man grows up without learning any skills and without God's calling into the ministry – he is just going to get a job somewhere to support himself and his family, it is shortsighted not to plan. In our culture it is very difficult to get a job that will supply the needs for a family without some planning – either higher education or vocational training, apprenticeships, etc.

Protection – God also calls us to protect our families. This means to protect them physically from physical harm and danger but it also means to protect emotionally and spiritually. We'll get into this aspect of protection a little later in the study.

When we discussed all of this in the Sunday School class, someone asked if that means that the husband has to make all decisions in the home. What if the wife does a better job with the finances or what about decorating the kitchen? My answer to that is that if the husband delegates the keeping of the checkbook to the wife, then that is fine, but the responsibility remains his. If something happens to the family financially, he cannot say, "The woman you gave me did this." like Adam did in the Garden. He must confess their problems to God and anyone else as though he is the one who is responsible because he is.

Questions to Ponder:

1. Why do you think God is willing to cancel a wife's or daughter's vow simply because her husband or father says it will not stand?

2. Do you think my thought that we are still required to take dominion and do work related to that is valid? Why or why not? I'd enjoy hearing back from some of you on this question.

3. We just touched on the responsibility of the man to provide for and protect his wife and family. We usually think of this in terms of physical needs such as food, clothing and protection from physical danger. Take some time to think through and make a list of the kind of emotional and spiritual provision and protection a wife and family needs.

Lesson 3

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let the wives be* to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.³

Let's focus now on verse 25. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.

In the next two verses we see that Christ took upon himself our sin and guilt and took the punishment for that sin upon himself.

I Peter 2:24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed

II Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Many times in our human relationships we are looking for someone to blame rather than being willing to take the blame upon ourselves. Remember in the garden how God confronted Adam and he immediately blamed his wife for what had happened. She then blamed the serpent. This is the way we usually handle blame. In a marriage, it is very important for the husband to have the same attitude toward his wife that Christ had for the church. We are told that we are to love our wives in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.

To give ourselves for our wife means more than opening the car door for her, or watching the kids so she can go shopping or doing the dishes so that she can sit back and relax a few minutes. There is no question that it means those things, but it means more than that. It means that as we bear the responsibility of being the covenant head of our home, we are to give ourselves for her in a spiritual sense. Now obviously we cannot provide salvation for her as the Lord Jesus did for us, but we can take the guilt and responsibility for things that go wrong in the home – we can take these things off her shoulders and bear the responsibility for them. We can go to God in prayer and take the sins of the family to Him there.

Look at the prayer of Daniel in chapter 9

3 - Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. ⁴And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, ⁵"we have sinned and committed iniquity,

³*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. ⁶“Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. ⁷“O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. ⁸“O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. ⁹“To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. ¹⁰“We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. ¹¹“Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. ¹²“And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. ¹³“As *it is* written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. ¹⁴“Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. ¹⁵“And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as *it is* this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly! ¹⁶“O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people *are* a reproach to all *those* around us. ¹⁷“Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸“O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. ¹⁹“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”⁴

Daniel wasn’t offering up a family prayer, but rather a prayer for his people. But notice the fact that although Daniel was a sinner like any other man, he was undoubtedly not personally guilty of the sins he was confessing in this prayer. He was confessing the sins of the people. He was taking responsibility and confessing their sins. You as a husband and father in your home can do the same thing. When the finances go sour because of mismanagement, you can confess that before God and take responsibility for it. When a child goes astray, you can confess the lack of discipline you have provided and the lack of prayer on behalf of the family and the lack of time and attention you have given to the child. No matter how well you think you have done in these areas, you can still confess them and personalize them as the head of your home. Christ took the blame and punishment for your sins. You are to do the same for your wife.

Questions to Ponder

1. Shouldn't the wife have to confess her own sins and be responsible for the decisions she has made in her home? Why should the husband have to confess these things?
2. I mentioned finances and a straying child as examples of areas where the husband can take upon himself the responsibility and blame on behalf of the family. What are some other major areas where a husband should/could also do the same thing?
3. What steps can you take to nip the "blame game" in the bud?

Lesson 4

As we continue our study, we are looking at Ephesians 5. Verses 22 – 27 read as follows:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Last time we talked about what it meant for the husband to be the head of the wife. Look back at Lesson 3 if you need to review the material. Today we will focus on verse 26 where Paul says that just as Christ also loved the church we are to love our wives in the respect that Christ had the purpose of sanctify her and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.

Notice here that it is the man's role to be the spiritual sanctifying influence on his family. Women usually take the lead in spiritual matters. They are the ones who usually encourage the family to go to church. If there is a family prayer time, the wife or mother usually is the one to initiate the practice. But the role of the husband as the covenantal head is clear. Just as Christ took the initiative in giving himself for his bride for the purpose of sanctifying and cleansing her through the word, we husbands should do the same for our wife and family.

The fact that the woman is often the one more interested in spiritual matters is also an area of vulnerability for her. In I Timothy 2:8-15 we read:

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. ¹¹Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹²And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.⁵

We find here that it was Eve who was deceived and not Adam. Eve was vulnerable to the temptation of Satan. She was out on her own when the devil found her and made his evil suggestion. It is interesting to me that the passage quoted above begins with the admonition for men to pray everywhere. Some places the word "men" is used in a generic way meaning all human beings. But in this case the word is for male. God is stressing that men should be praying. I think women don't have much of a problem with praying, but men are more sluggish in this area and God admonishes us to be the pray-ers.

⁵*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

In II Timothy 3:6-7 we read:

For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

In this passage we find God speaking of the sort of evil false teachers that will characterize the last days. He is concerned that these kind are the sort who make captives of gullible women. Most false cults start out by reaching the women. The strength that women have in being more interested in spiritual matters turns out many times to be the source of deceit and confusion in their lives because if they are not carefully taught and if they don't have a solid spiritual leader, they may fall victim to these sorts of spiritual seducers.

In I Peter 3:7 we read:

Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

God tells us that the wife is to be given honor because she is the weaker vessel.

Now I am sure that many women may be offended by the things that I am saying here from Scripture, but we need to remember that this is the Word of God we are talking about. God is the one who tells us these things. It is part of his creative order and part of what occurred as a result of the fall.

The purpose in discussing this is that we as men need to make sure that we are taking the steps we need to take in order to sanctify and cleanse our wives with the Word of God. It is our responsibility to do so. If we are going to do this, we will need to do several things:

1. We need to feed ourselves spiritually. In II Corinthians 7:1 Paul writes, Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. We as husbands and fathers need to make sure that our lives are clean before God. That will take time. We need to be in God's Word, meditating on it and applying it to our lives.
2. We need to know Scripture and know how to apply it to the needs of our wife and family. We are to study to show ourselves approved unto God. It is a serious matter that we have embarked on in taking on the responsibility of wife and family and we need to make sure we are spiritually prepared for the leadership that is required.
3. We need to know our spouse – her needs, desires and vulnerabilities. In the I Peter passage cited above he tells us to dwell with them with understanding. That means we need to listen to our wife – not just to her words but also to the feelings and expressions that she uses so that we will know where she hurts and what she is thinking about. We

need to understand what things cause her worry and care and then we need to be able to apply Scripture to those areas in a loving and understanding way.

4. We need to actually take steps to apply the Word in these areas. When Jesus came to redeem us to himself, he gave himself for us with the purpose of cleansing us and sanctifying us. We too need to do the same thing. It should be our purpose and goal to help our wife along spiritually so that she grows and matures into the glorious woman God wants her to be. That is our responsibility. And that leads to the fifth point.
5. Take responsibility for spiritual instruction. So many Christian wives are starving for spiritual leadership from their husbands. In I Corinthians 14:35, Paul writes, Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says.³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Now I realize that this is probably a controversial passage in today's climate and I don't want to get into the discussion right now as to whether he is talking about church services including Sunday School classes or just worship services. My main point in bringing up this passage is to show that it is God's expectation that the woman ought to be able to bring her questions to her husband and he should be able to answer them. He is her spiritual authority. If there are spiritual questions she has that he doesn't know how to answer, he should be the one to dig into the word, have a session or two with an Elder in the church and work through the topic so that he can then help his wife to understand. It is his responsibility. She shouldn't be going to the pastor and having sessions with him so in order to have her questions answered.

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. We are to do the same thing spiritually for our wives. Where is my wife struggling? What is the spiritual remedy? What are her weaknesses? What is the necessary spiritual food?

Some men may say, "I don't even have my own life in shape. How can I help my wife? The answer is that you need to get your life into shape. Begin to read, study and meditate on God's Word. Make it a part of your life.

The goal for Christ was that he might present his bride to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. As our lives move forward, our wife should be more filled with the fruit of the Spirit, more holy, etc because of your giving yourself for her.

What keeps us from being the kind of leaders God wants us to be? I think we love our freedom, or toys, our friends. We need to learn where God's priorities actually are and the seriousness of the business of life.

Next time we'll look at the characteristics that God lists for Elders and Deacons in the church because it is obvious that these character traits are the ones God is seeking to build into the lives of all men who are seeking to please Him.

Questions to Ponder

1. Why do you think it is that most men don't take seriously their responsibility of being the spiritual leader for their wife?
2. What recommendations would you give to a young man contemplating marriage as far as getting himself into spiritual high gear for the role he is planning to take on?
3. How can we as men fulfill our responsibility to be the spiritual leader for our wife without putting her down or making her feel inferior?
4. If you are single, what steps will you take to make sure that you are developing spiritually to be the man of God that your wife will need?
5. If you are married, what steps will you take to evaluate your current level of spiritual leadership? What areas will you set as priorities for teaching in your home?

Lesson 5

As we wrap up our study of God's expectations for us as husbands, I would like us to consider the instructions that Paul gave to Titus and to Timothy. In Titus 2, Paul instructs Titus about what he is to teach the various groups. Two of these groups are the older men and the younger men. Also in Titus and in I Timothy, Paul gives instructions concerning the standards expected of church leaders. I think both of these portions of Scripture are instructive to us as husbands and fathers.

Read through the following passages from I Timothy and Titus.

I Timothy 3:2-9 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.

Titus 1:6-9 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

Titus 2:2 -- that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience.
Titus 2:6 -- Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded*

*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

I would like to pull out several key ideas that seem to repeat themselves in these passages.

First, the word "reverent" shows up several times. Reverent means serious, with gravity and dignity; inspiring reverence and awe. You see this in the description of elders, deacons and also in the Titus 2:2 passage. There is the need for us as men to develop a reverent attitude toward God and toward life. There is far too much silliness and frivolity. In today's world, if someone suggests anything that appears to limit "fun", he is immediately ignored as being on some loony fringe. I believe that God speaks of joy and enthusiasm in our living. There is a place for fun and games and celebrations. However, in my opinion, there is a lack of seriousness in dealing with our responsibilities of leadership in the church and the home. There needs to be a dignity and

gravity about our lives that inspires others. This is not something that is just picked up along the way. Paul made a specific point to tell Titus that he should teach this to the men. When was the last time you knew this topic to be included in a discipleship plan? It doesn't happen very frequently.

The second key element repeated several times in these passages is the concept of being sober-minded. These terms refer to a self-controlled life, a life that is alert to the surrounding circumstances. We need to know what kinds of philosophies and ideas are forming an attack against the faith. We need to be self controlled and alert in our preparation for the battles that will certainly come upon us and our families. We need to be prepared to respond to these challenges. This requires us to be self controlled and alert.

Finally, we need to be sound in faith, love and endurance. We live in a day when there are many challenges to the faith. It's important for us as husbands and fathers to know the Scripture well enough to be able to defend our families and churches from doctrinal error. What does it take to develop this characteristic? We need to be sure that our Bible study and prayer time are a high priority in our schedule. Joshua 1:8 tells us that our way will be prosperous if we meditate on God's Word day and night. On any given day it doesn't seem to us that it's having that much of an effect on our lives, but over time, we learn the way God thinks and the principles he wants to build into our lives. This results in a mature faith that is able to weather the storms of life and to combat doctrinal error. Don't allow the pressures of life and the apparent importance of other things squeeze this vital area from your life.