

Becoming God's Leader

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The home is more than a house where people eat, sleep, and talk. The Christian home is a little society -- an organization, a business, and a part of the spiritual body of Christ.

- It is far more complex than most people realize.
- The average man marries to enjoy himself, not realizing that he has taken on an awesome responsibility to lead his wife and his household.
- He has become the guide of a small organization, a social organism, which our Lord Jesus calls a family.

Today we see much frustration and confusion in our homes. One reason is that the man, who should be head of the home, has never recognized his responsibility as leader. I hear married men say, "I'm just not a leader." -- *as if that took care of it all!* Husband, if you are not a leader you are not fulfilling your destiny because God requires leadership from a husband.

Consider:

- Today's families are foundering in frustration, confusion, and emptiness.
- Such families have vague goals and little sense of direction.
- This could well be the reason their rebellious children cannot wait to leave home.
- These children are unhappy because they see no real purpose or meaning in their homes.

***The father is primarily responsible for
this situation, not the mother, or the children.***

I. WHAT DOES GOD HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY?

(Consider Eph. 5:23-25; I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:21.)

A. Today, the major problem is one of "who is in charge?"

1. Who has put the man over the wife and family?

- God designed the husband to be head of his wife and family.
- Man cannot improve on God's design.

2. God's spells out clearly that the man is to be the spiritual leader.

3. But the question is, "*Is he acting as God's leader?*"

- Too often the man is either neglecting, ignoring, abdicating his position, or
- he is lording it over his family like a dictator.

The average man comes home every workday evening, sits down to a palatable meal, watches television or putters with a hobby, and goes to bed to get up the next

morning and repeat the same process with little conception of the human assets and liabilities he is handling in his family organization. He is basically blind to his opportunities!

II. HE IS THE FAMILY PRESIDENT!

In your homes , average husband, you are the president of a corporation with many divisions, activities, and needs.

A. There are corporation NEEDS!

Let me list some of them:

- a. Accommodation
- b. food service
- c. transportation
- d. education
- e. worship
- f. recreation
- g. financial counseling
- h. medicine
- i. maintenance (which includes carpentry, plumbing, sanitation, painting, decorating, lawn service, and perhaps animal care)

No other organization in the world attempts to operate so many divisions without a paid secretary. Nor does any other organization have higher standards for harmony, prosperity, and stability.

Young men thinking of marrying should think more than twice. To become a husband and father is an awesome responsibility in the eyes of God.

Surely the wife is a *"help-meet"* in many of these things -- but being **head** does makes the man basically responsible for all of them.

B. There are corporation objectives. . . these are God's for you!

1. God's objectives when He established the home were to arrange:

- a family unit of husband and wife and parents and children -- that would cause them to ---
- built up, edify, and encourage each other.

2. God's plan is that family members are:

- growing, building, and learning in spiritual ways, and
- that they are continuously changing and more and more growing into the image of Christ. (Rom. 8:28,29)

3. God's objective is that we would rise to the potential of what we can be in Christ.

- The husband must maximize his leadership for the glory of the Lord.
- The wife must maximize her potential as his help-meet - giving herself to her husband, *as unto the Lord*.

C. There are basics to this corporation:

1. The wife who says, "I don't like the idea of being subject to my husband," has a streak of rebellion in her.

2. As God places upon the man the responsibility of headship of the home, He relieves the wife to become the submissive woman that He wants her to be.

3. If she competes for the position, function and responsibility of her husband, she is cheating herself from being the maximum woman she is created to be.
4. If we yield to God's design, we can fulfill His purpose and objective.
5. The obligation of being the leader of the home belongs to the husband even when he resigns the post.
6. There is no leave of absence or early retirement in this organization.
7. By virtue of birth and marriage, the man has a life tenure, and **men we might as well accept the job as God has given it!**

III. HE IS THE HEAD: (I Cor.11:3; Eph. 5:23)

Try to name one project requiring careful decisions by a team of people that has been successful without a designated or recognized leader. All the way from playground competition to political campaigns, wrangling smother's action and individuality destroys unity unless one leader is recognized. Why do we expect the complex enterprise of marriage to be any different?

Can you imagine a football game where everyone was determined to be quarter-back on a given evening?. Or a cafe where all who worked there arrived determined to do the cooking, or all served or all were insistent upon running the cash register? It would never work. No, all must fulfill their given roles for things to work smoothly.

A. What headship does not mean:

1. We are not talking about equality or inequality, superiority or inferiority in the family.
2. We are not talking about a man being more capable or more intelligent in a practical way than the wife is.
3. And it is not a matter of one being more superior and therefore having "*special rights.*"

B. Some aspects of what it does mean:

1. The family has a God-ordained structure to achieve as its goal.
 - This structure allocates authority, just as in a business venture.
 - The husband and wife are to relate like a president and vice-president of a company.
2. In considering Ephesians 5:23-24 and I Peter 3:1-6 it is inconsistent for the wife to claim -- independence and authority.

If we say that the Bible is wrong in placing the man in authority over the women, then we must say Christ is not the appointed leader of the Church, nor is God the Father necessarily the leader of the triune Godhead in its functioning. Consider I Corinthians 11:3.

- Despite their different roles in the divine hierarchy, the Father and Son are equal. BUT...

- As Christ was submissive to the Father, the husband must be to Christ, and the wife to her husband.
3. Consider Christ's example:
- Jesus asked obedience from his disciples but He welcomed their questions and honored their feelings.
 - He set a standard of perfection before them, but He assured them of forgiveness and continued love in times of failure.

IV. WILL THE MAN BE A DEADBEAT OR A DICTATOR?

Our image of dad as the authority figure in the family has suffered many distortions. Among these is the man.....

A. IF he is a deadbeat!

1. He may want to boss his family, but doesn't want the many responsibilities that accompany the position.
2. He may be very indifferent or insensitive to the needs of his family and inclined to shy away from hard decisions.
3. His remoteness and indecisiveness will create insecurity in his wife and children.
4. They never know what they can count on, and their perspective of his authority may be lots of talk and little action.

B. If he is a dictator:

1. He rules like a dictator -- an autocratic leader who permits no questioning of his decrees.
2. He is predominately a controller. He must control everything or he is not happy.
3. His word is the first and the last-- is law. He rules supreme but not in the hearts and thoughts of his browbeaten family.
4. He may boast about running his family -- but everyone knows he only maintains outward conformity.
5. Behind his back, family members are ignoring him just as he ignores their feelings. When a man is genuine head of his family, he doesn't have to prove anything to anyone; he is quietly obeying God and enjoying the results of submission to the family's needs and to the Lord as supreme in his life.
6. A dictatorial father may be a --
 - disciplinarian who knows no leniency, who rules by the word of his law.
 - He will find no claim for such authority from God.

- In comparison (Eph. 5:23) Christ Jesus was patient, gentle, and loving. (We are to rule our families as Christ ruled the Church.) His measures were firm, but He always acted in love.

C. The effects, facts, and hurts of being a dictator.

1. The man who wants to make all the decisions without discussion or counsel from others - -
 - misses one his greatest opportunities for guiding his children to maturity in Christ, (in the Word of God) and
 - his wife to contented partnership.

Participation in decision-making gives younger members of the family a feeling of self-worth and confidence, essential qualities for becoming responsible and productive adults.

2. The autocratic father resists his family's opinions and ideas. . .
 - because he lacks deep-down-confidence in himself.
 - His poor self-image is threatened by any suggestions that he then construes as criticism of himself.
 - He has a shattered sense of self-worth and he blindly extends he destruction to his children.

D. What is the truth about the matter?

1. Each person must be recognized as worthy, distinctive persons whose gifts and talents are God given.
2. The members of the household must be understood and accepted as they are. (Rom. 15:7)
3. *The Christ-like head* of the home coordinates the varied abilities and weaknesses of those in the home into a diverse unit helping each other and serving God.

Blessed is the wife that can live in a happy, secure home under the leadership of a husband who looks to God. She will relish being an essential part of that family in giving of herself. There the children can grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

V. MANAGEMENT POLICIES OF A GODLY DAD:

The husband as chief priest in the home, has a personal ministry to meet the needs of his family.

Here are special, practical things a godly leader in a home will seek to do:

A. First, he sees himself as the family leader, as God declares.

B. In consultation with his family, he will determine the policies by which the household operates: how much money to spend, how late the children can stay out, standards of courtesy and modesty, discipline, and a host of things.

- C. The godly leader will assume responsibility** for his decisions or the lack of them, not blaming others for his mistakes.
- D. He will delegate authority for carrying out policies**, allowing his wife and children to have part according to their needs, talents, and abilities.
- E. He will guide his family in setting individual and family goals**, starting where they are now in experience and understanding.
He will establish financial goals, spiritual, social, and material goals.
- F. A godly man will teach his children practical principles** for everyday living that will accelerate their progress and spare them future grief.
- G. He will be accessible to his family.** Children often misbehave to gain attention. They need loving and attentive counsel.
When the man of the house is too busy to attend to his household, they will feel that he does not care.
- H. The godly father will forgive mistakes** -- till 70 times seven even though he will lovingly and firmly teach along the way.
- I. The responsible leader will lead his family in regular prayer and Bible reading** to nurture spiritual life and relate all the family concerns to God.
- J. The godly father and husband will learn to depend** more and more upon the Holy Spirit for his daily guidance and power. (Eph. 5:18-21)

Using Solomon's famous description of a praise-worthy wife in Proverbs 31 as a guide, here is contemporary paraphrase of a tribute to God's leader in the home:

*Who can find a faithful husband, for his price is far above that
of a Cadillac or even a Rolls Royce.*

*The heart of his wife doth safely trust in him whether he is on a
business trip, or comes home late from the office.*

He tries to do the best for her and his family as long as he lives.

He learns to use the tools of his trade and isn't afraid of a hard day's work.

He is knowledgeable about world affairs and uses this for his family's enrichment.

*He rises early in the morning for his devotions and asks
for wisdom for his daily tasks.*

*He considers investments carefully and buys a home, property,
or business with an eye toward the future.*

*He watches his health and gets the sort of exercise he needs
in order to stay physically fit.*

*His work is of good quality even if he has to put in extra
hours to make it that way.*

*He doesn't neglect his home or the Biblical discipline
of his children.*

He is concerned about social issues and tries to help those who are in need.

*He isn't afraid of difficult times because he has learned to trust in God and has done
what he could to provide for his family.*

*He nourishes himself and his family both spiritually
and physically.*

*His wife is well-thought-of in their community
because he never belittles her.*

He has a hobby that is relaxing and worthwhile.

*His conversation is wise and uplifting. In fact he makes
it a rule of his life to speaking kindly.*

He is interested in all things that concern his family and is not lazy nor indifferent.

*His children love him and admire him, and his wife is proud of him
and says, "Many men have succeeded in this world,
but you are the best of them all. If I had it to do over again I would still
marry you."*

*Flattery is deceitful, and good looks are only on the surface, but a man
who loves and fears God shall be truly praised.*

*This sort of man deserves to be treated like a king, for his life proves that what he believes
is real.*

1. Find out what GOD wants of your life.

- a. Find out what God wants from and in your life above everything else.

Remember that when we seek God with all our hearts, fully trust Him, and want to fulfill His will, God will give us the desires of our hearts. (See Psalm 34:5,6.) To me this means when I love God as I ought, He will move upon my heart strings to exercise my desires. My desires will become His desires; therefore as I pray I can anticipate that God will be at work in me to the fulfillment of those desires. And each desire will be in line with His goals for my life.

- b. Find out what God wants in life above everything else. In that be sure that you do not lean unto your own understanding and that in all your ways you acknowledge Him. (See Proverbs 3:5,6.)
- c. Determine your goals as you search out that these are also His goals. We need to be men who believe God for goals set before us that are pleasing to God. We must embrace Biblical goals or will languish in life and aimlessly move through the years.

2. Set a time table for the fulfillment of the Goal

- a. To me, it is obvious that Godly leadership, spoken of in the Word of God often had time tables for the goals which God had set before His men.
- b. I cannot visualize Paul without goals, and a time table which carried him through the missionary journeys to the end that churches would be established.
- c. I cannot picture Elijah without some goals based upon God's will for His life.
- d. I cannot picture Daniel without some goals as he purposed in his heart to do God's will about a number of matters.

If we are to fulfill goals we must stay the path and not go rabbit-chasing. It is not enough to talk about goals; we must get at it. Start out this very moment. Remember that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. We must begin with anticipation of God's power and direction, and the persistence to fulfill the goal. Too often we do plan to memorize the Word of God, to witness, to serve the Lord, to tithe, and to do a host of things. Too often we do not plan or if we plan then we fail to set a timetable for the execution of our goals.

3. Develop intensity of purpose.

- a. A dynamic for fulfilling goals is to have intensity of purpose, the strength of discipline that's involved in an athletic team.

Players will give their all and suffer every kind of pain in the hardest work they have ever done -- all for the sake of their school, their personal recognition, and their teammates. The goal was there and the dynamics resulted.

- b. Consider Paul's intensity of purpose in the goals that God gave him and he had for his life. (Study Acts 26:15-19.)
- c. Then consider Acts 9:11-17 which helps us to understand God's goals for his life.

- d. Paul obviously had goals as an unsaved person.
- e. In salvation Paul was redirected by God, made a complete 180 degree turn and began fulfilling God's goals with the same intensity he had against God prior to his salvation.

II. THE DISCIPLINE OF GOALS.

God expects every man to become a leader. The man is to "dominate" or control and govern the world God made. He is to become a leader whether married or unmarried.

The man is to master the planet and bring it into subjection. (See Genesis 1:23-30.) Are you the leader that God planned for you to be? Probably, if goals mean little to you, then you rarely consider the necessity of building your life to become a leader by God's grace.

1. Consider what is so often lacking.

Napoleon Hill in *Think and Grow Rich* has listed ten causes for failure in leadership. (While he was probably unsaved, we can learn something from highly-motivated, famous leaders in their own fields.) The ten causes are:

- a. inability to organize details,
- b. unwillingness to render humble service,
- c. expectation of pay for what they know instead of what they do with that which they know,
- d. fear of competition from followers,
- e. lack of imagination,
- f. selfishness, • intemperance • disloyalty
- g. emphasis on the authority of leadership rather than being a servant,
- h. emphasis on title, rather than performance.

2. Consider what is needed.

- a. To achieve any goal there must be the conscious and the unconscious commitment of all you are to the dedication of the effort of that goal!
- b. There must be harmony and energy expended to the fulfillment of God-given goals.
- c. There must be oneness in purpose if you are to reach your goal.

3. Consider four suggestions for success.

- a. **Pay the price.** Results are directly proportionate to the effort we put forth. We must understand emotionally that as we sow we will also reap. (See Galatians 6:6-9.) ;
- b. **Practice imagination.** Can you see yourself by the power and grace of God, by the leadership of the Holy Spirit, achieving the God-given goal you've attempted for GOD'S GLORY?
- c. **Practice courage** . Expect to exercise the kind of courage God spoke of and promised Joshua. (See Joshua 1:7-9)) Refuse to believe that there are any circumstances sufficient to cause you to fail, for where God guides, He will also supply the courage to persevere.

- d. **Act upon the goals.** God wants to place on your mind and heart certain goals for His glory that are in keeping with the talents and abilities He has given you. It is not enough to know the goal intellectually and to sense it emotionally, for it will only come to fruition by volition. Achievement demands immediate, dynamic action.

Some Personal Goals by God's Grace:

Immediate:

- 1 .
- 2 .
- 3 .

Long-range:

- 1 .
- 2 .
- 3 .

III. THE BENEFIT OF GOALS

When we are determined to be in God's will, fulfilling His plan for our lives, we will naturally become goal conscious. It will be our natural desire and concern to be aware of the goals God has for us.

1. We will have personal happiness.

- a. Probably one of most outstanding benefits of setting and fulfilling goals is personal happiness.
- b. Life is too short to be unhappy. You will never be truly happy until you are achieving a worthy, challenging goal.
- c. Remember that it cannot be selfish, nor can it be evil (or be tainted with sin) and still bring personal joy.
- d. Worthy goals will benefit your family, if you are married. They will benefit the church, community, society, and yes, even the nation.

You see, God planned that your abilities are very closely related to your God-given, pure and holy desires. If you desire little you will exercise little of your capacity. If they are from God these desires will be manifested in all areas of your life, including your employment, relationships and service to the King of Kings.

- e. We must act now toward setting long-range goals.

You can only become dynamically successful for the Lord as you set Biblical, God-honoring and God-given goals and work toward them. This is where joy comes in, for we know that we are fulfilling eternal values. But before we can do something, we must first **be** something, that is, we must **become in Christ** what we ought to be by His power and grace.

2. We will have personal fulfillment.

Paul could say *"I kept the faith, I finished the course and there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."* (See II Timothy 4:7,8.) I wonder, if at the end of the journey we can look back upon life and see that we were in God's will and did His bidding and fulfilled the goals which He outlined for us.

- a. The sense of personal fulfillment can be very great and is something that God wills we should experience.

- b. The opposite -- loss and hurt from the lack of completing God-given goals -- is too often the experience of so many.
- c. The Christian who has lived a selfish life will find that the end brings tremendous grief, trauma, frustration, and anguish of soul. The cry will probably be, *"If only I had done God's will, if only I had sought His eternal goals, if only I had lived differently."*

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Set one goal at a time. Be sure that it is Biblical and challenging.
2. Don't settle for something less than your best. Seek God's best and not some secondary goal.
3. Think about it all the time; that is, write it down so that it becomes a part of you. Build mind-pictures of the joy of fulfilling that goal for the Lord. Use the five senses to bring your total personality to bear upon it.
4. Drive it into your subconscious mind. God made our subconscious minds to work for us; remember that it takes orders. It is fantastically creative for it never rests.
5. Write out immediate goals and long-range goals for a ten year period and then five-and then two year goals. Have monthly checkups. Know God's plan and then work the plan God has given.
6. Consider some specific areas where you are determined to set goals -- for your personal life, devotional life, family life, financial needs and concerns, and other important areas of life that are meaningful to you.

As God's LEADER, Are You A Person Of WORTH, VALUE, and MATURE CHARACTER?

Introduction:

There is a very interesting phenomenon occurring in twentieth century America. From birth to late teens a child's overwhelming perception of authority figures is that they are nearly 100% female, with an occasional male making a generally ineffectual appearance.

- In the hospital it is the female nurses who are responsible for almost every aspect of child care.
- At home mother is usually the dominant figure. In our public grade school, 90% of the teachers are women.
- The first police person a child meets is more than likely a female crossing guard.
- At the grocery store, in the restaurants, in vacation Bible School or Sunday School, etc., who does the child see for the most part?

Does the man in the average church realize the importance of the father in the child's life? ***Dads need to become very visible in the child's life.***

And what has happened to the world's men? Many unsaved men wear clothing or items that used to be totally feminine. Others are "macho men" who act irresponsibly with their wives and children, or indulge in sexual "freedom" or do their "own thing."

Sad, but for many men there is little, if any, clear-cut commitment to anything. In contrast, God desires that we who are saved men exhibit godly manhood. What is manhood? What does it mean to be a man for God?

Manhood and Christlikeness ought to be synonymous. Man has conquered the mountains, the oceans and even outer space. But the greatest achievement of all is when man conquers himself. *"Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."* (Prov. 16:32; 25:28)

Manhood and Christlikeness should be synonymous.

Consider these questions:

1. How can we become men of worth, of value and of character?
2. Can we look at our lives and say, *"I am mature in Christ. I have grown into a person of character for God's glory"*?
3. And then, truly, what is maturity anyway?
4. Do we recognize the characteristics of what it means to be a mature man?

Memory verse -- II Corinthians 7:1

I. YOU CAN MAKE A DECISION TO BE A MAN OF MATURITY.

- Maturity is synonymous with age, gray hair, or how long we have been saved; it is a process that should continue until death.
- Defining maturity: *"Being fully developed in character, in thinking, and in reactions based on Biblical standards"*

1. **The meaning of maturity** (I Cor. 13:11; I Pet. 1:3-9 -- Add to your faith... virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.)
 - a. Basically, I think, that maturity depends more on self discipline than on any other thing.
 - b. Maturity is manifested to the extent that our person is self-controlled in every area and all aspects of our lives.
 - c. This can only take place as we are Spirit-controlled. The fruit of the Spirit is temperance or self-control. (See Galatians 2:22-23.)
 - d. Maturity is not based upon what we desire, but what God desires. We will be men of worth, value, and character as we become disciplined persons.

2. **The characteristics of maturity** A man who is mature is a person who is under control or self-disciplined. But there is something more.
 - a. The aim of self-discipline is to have a disciplined character that goes beyond the minimum demands of specific disciplines and permeates the whole life.
 - b. A mature man is disciplined not in just a few areas for the sake of appearance, but is disciplined in the inner man by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the application of the Word of God.
 - d. The outward godly life which people see will be the result of the inner dynamic of self-discipline at the center of the life. Therefore, the heart or emotions as well as the intellect and will are moved upon by God.
 - d. In a general sense, self-discipline is the ability to regulate conduct by precept and judgment rather than by feelings, desire, pressure from others, or social custom. *It is basically the ability to subordinate the life to Christ and the Word.*

It is possible for any man to be a sincere and regenerated (born again) follower of Jesus and yet remain undisciplined in many areas of life. In fact, that is probably the norm and not the abnormal, much to our shame as men.

II. YOU CAN BECOME A LEADER WHO WALKS IN BIBLICAL LOVE!

(Study John 13:34-35; 14:21-23; 15:10; Ephesians 5:1-2)

1. It will be a pure love.

- a. God's commands are absolutes . But to a large degree our modern age mistakes lust for love; it relegates love to a glandular function -- a reaction to the angle of a neckline or the height a skirt. The world's idea of love is far removed from God's definition of real love.
- b. According to God, love is not basically a feeling. Sometimes it doesn't even feel good. Sometimes it demands sacrifice that is not easy, but real love is always good!
- c. Love centers in the will. That is why love can be commanded and why God commands us to love. Biblical, God-like love (agape) is the obligation of marriage and the privilege in marriage.

To a great extent today the unsaved American male, flees from commandments. Or rebels. Some will say, *"I can't love any more. I just can't feel anything."* That is not true. Giving love is the act of the will. *But the spirit of the age is the spirit of rejection toward authority.* This spirit has also infiltrated the church. How sad when men especially are rebellious to God's will and plan.

2. It will be a godly love.

- a. How does God love? We MUST love that which God loves and hate what God hates. And by the way, what does God hate? (See Prov. 6:16-19.)
- b. Maybe we don't consider I Corinthians 13:1-8 often enough. What are the characteristics of godly love? Are we living them?

3. It Will be a Ministering Love.

- a. God's love is a giving love. True love will serve, giving all for the sake of the one loved. It will be an unconditional love that gives based not on the merit, abilities, or the service of another, but freely and fully gives.
- b. We can become persons of worth, value, and character as we allow the love of God to control us, fill us, and overflow through our lives to others on a daily basis. (See Romans 5:5.) Is this true in your life as a man?
- c. There are those who need you to keep yourself in the love of God. (See Jude 20, 21.) We will build maturity as we are controlled by the discipline of God's love.

III. YOU MUST BECOME A MAN WHO QUICKLY REPENTS.

- God commands men everywhere to repent. (See Acts 17:30.) God would impress a preacher to command men to repent. A man of worth, value and character is one who not only repents and accepts Christ as Savior, but who walks a walk of repentance **after** being saved.
- We don't just invite men to repent, to be converted, and to put faith in Christ, we are to command men to repent, to be converted, and to put faith in Christ. There is a key difference between a command and an invitation.
- If I give you an invitation, you have an option. You can either receive it or reject it. But if I command you, you have no option. ***You either obey or rebel.***
- God did not get Moses up on the mountain and give him a list of "Ten Suggestions." God gave commandments.
- In our making the gospel more readily acceptable, we have been taught to invite people to accept Jesus. Given the option, most reject it. It is not *"try Jesus."* We are commanded to come to Him for salvation. The lost must obey the gospel. (If you doubt this then please study Romans 10:16,17; Hebrews 5:9; II Thess. 1: 7,8.)

1. We need to repent of worldly wisdom. (Study James 3:13-18.)

- a. This wisdom is a walk in our own thoughts, our own private deliberations and decisions based upon what we think. '
- b. It is a worldly wisdom on the part of men who, though saved, think according to what pleases them and fulfills their desires and wishes.

- c. Such wisdom is the manifestation of carnality that controls many a saved man.
- d. This so-called wisdom brings confusion, envy, and every kind of evil work.

Men, we need to be set free from worldly, carnal wisdom that brings all kinds of difficulty to those around us and under our care. What a contrast this worldly wisdom is to God's wisdom that is "*pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, without*" (Note James 3:17) When we walk in God's wisdom we will experience a growth in righteousness that can only take place when we sow peace, for godly living can only blossom in the atmosphere of peace sown by those who make peace.

Righteousness cannot be developed in an atmosphere of turmoil.
(Consider James 3:18.)

2. We need to repent of our disobedience.

- a. We are commanded to obey. God maximizes a man's personality, talent, and characteristics when he obeys God.
- b. God will maximize your manhood and use you in a mighty way when you are determined to sell out to God in total obedience.
- c. Satan in contrast is a usurper. He comes only to steal, kill, destroy,
- d. Satan and sin will rob you of your personality. Satan will steal your character as he seeks to produce disobedience in your life. God will maximize your life if you do His will. While Satan **plunders**, God **empowers** and **ennobles**.
(See Romans 14:17-19.)
- e. Scripture is very clear about the need of having sorrow unto repentance.

The failing member of the Corinthian Church was disobedient. This brought God's judgment and the church's chastening. Often disobedience brings confusion, pain, and suffering. It dispels all peace -- the peace of individuals close to the failing person and the peace of the church. The man needed to repent of his sin and disobedience. (Study I Corinthians 5:1-13.)

- f. Remember, godly sorrow is necessary for repentance. Human sorrow is usually manifested because we are sorry that we are caught, but godly sorrow is for the cause of it. (Note II Corinthians 7:8-13; Psalm 32:1-5; Psalm 51.)

CONCLUSIONS:

- God commands confession. It is only as we confess our lack of maturity, of love or of repentance that we will get right and be right with God. We must confess to be rid our sin and confess in order to put on righteousness. (See Proverbs 28:13.)
- Unconfessed sin is unforgiven sin. We need forgiveness and cleansing. (I Jh. 1:7,9)
- Read and study I John 1:4-2:2. Notice that the emphasis is upon fellowship. Christ dealt with the problem of sin for us that we might have fellowship with Him and with one another. It is not enough for men to repent, but we need cleansing from the sin so that we do not continue in the sin. ***Oh, to be freed from the habitual pattern of sin.*** Praise God, He forgives and cleanses us.

- If you have never been willing to accept responsibility for your sins against your family, your wife, your own life or against others (or you find it hard to admit sin and wrong) you can never know true godly manhood.
- Forgiveness is a release. When God forgives us, He releases us from that sin forever. Never will He remember it against us again. What a joy to know that! (Isa. 43:25)
- We need to be willing to deal with sin, to be honest about sin, and determine to become mature, victorious men in Christ. God help you to build true manhood!

Application and Guiding Questions:

1. Why does maturity depend so much upon self discipline?
2. Would you agree that what a person loves shows his character?
3. What are some things God hates? Make a study of this by looking up the word hate in a concordance. (See Proverbs 6.)
4. Why does God expect the Christian to repent? What does repentance mean to you?

Marks of Maturity!

1. **Dependability** -- using all my energies to do what others depend upon me to do. I Cor. 15:58
2. **Determination** -- Josh. 24:24 *"The Lord our God we will serve and His voice we will obey."*
3. **Control of the tongue** -- James 1:26; chapter 3 *"If any man offend not the same is a perfect man."*
4. **Orderliness** -- I Cor. 14:33, 40 For our God is not the author of confusion. . . we are to do all things decently and in order.
5. **Decisiveness** -- James 1:5-8, Not changeable, double-minded, without consistency and convictions.
6. **Loyalty** -- Prov. 28:20; Rev. 2:10, We are to be faithful unto death, for a faithful man abounds with blessings.
7. **Cooperation** -- Phil. 2:1-3; 4:3; Rom. 12:10, We are to be like-minded... having the same love, being kindly affectioned, in honor preferring one another.
8. **Faith** -- James 2:26; for faith without works is dead. *"I will show thee my faith by my works."* (vs. 18)

The Foundation For Personal Maturity is Spiritual Maturity

1. **It begins with being born again.** (See I Pet. 1:18-19, 23; John 1:12-13.)

2. Important daily decisions must follow:

- Search the Scriptures, daily, and pray. (Acts 17:11)
- Memorize the Word of God. (Psa. 119:9-11; 119:42, 98, 99-104, 105)
- Live by the Word of God; make decisions on the basis of what God says (Eph. 5:17; Eph. 6:6; Col. 4:12; Psa. 37:23)
- Confess sin and forsake sin. Confess sin daily for restored fellowship. (1 Jn 1:9)
- Practice His presence. Remind yourself often that He is near. (Heb. 13:5-6)
- True maturity will show in every aspect of our lives. We will want to be totally under the Lord's control. (Rom. 8:16-18)