

Faith & Family Class
Christ Reformed Baptist Church – New Castle, IN
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3/24/19

A God centered home VS. A child centered home

INTRO

We as Christians in the year 2019 are living and practicing our faith in an age of humanistic re-interpretation. Simply meaning that everything is up for being redefined according to the subjective whims of the unregenerate populace that comprises our society. Why, one's own sexual orientation is now considered something that can be totally explained away and re-interpreted to whatever fits the definition of a person's desire and if anyone dare suggest that one cannot arbitrarily and fictitiously make up truth to fit their own agenda they are quickly shouted down as hateful, unloving or judgmental!

Of course, we did not arrive at this point of confusion over night, the mounting attacks against absolute truth has been a long waged war, where depraved man pushes and advances his new found ideas as far and as hard as he can until meet with some level of modest resistance and then he eases up having already successfully shifted the boundary line of truth from off centered and more in harmony with his new and adulterated definition of truth.

Because, of these reasons...Christians and Christian families must individually and collectively come back again and again to the standard of all truth which is the Holy Bible and rest our understanding and practices on what it teaches us. This must be acknowledged, because even the very best of us (Man, Woman, Boy or Girl) can overtime, begin to be infected with the enchanted and abundant lies that are on parade all around us.

Thus, like fish swimming in waters that are largely designed to sweep us up in currents that are contrary to the wishes of our God, we

must get a good dose of biblical reality / Biblical truth to get our heads and thinking back on track. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” Thess. 5:21

This is what the Scriptures are for dear friends. To aid and help us in living as God’s distinct people in whatever age of compromise we may exist.

One aspect, or sphere of our lives that has undergone the most radical change (particularly during the 20th – 21st centuries) is that of the family. It has been largely re-defined and re-interpreted not according to truth but according to the lies of this age. For instance, Parent magazine in an ever-increasing attempt to desensitize us to its re-interpretation of what defines a family, featured on its March magazine cover, for the very first time a same-sex male couple and their adopted children. Of course, the logical person would immediately conclude that if the sin of sodomy, if largely excepted in a society, the result would be less and less children.

The attack on the family, the attack on marriage, the attack on God’s truth is why I want us to consider (in the context of Parenting) a sobering question: what are our homes centered upon? Are they centered upon God or the Children who God has blessed us with?

**INTENT TO BUILD/ENCOURAGE not
DESTROY/DISCOURAGE**

At the beginning allow me to simply say that whenever we hear truth, especially truth that reflects a certain aspect of our own failures, we tend to shut it off. Build a wall of self-protection as it were to insulate us from its penetrating sting. But, this is counter-productive.

Prov.19:20-21 “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.”

It is clear isn’t it, that the designed purpose of the Scripture’s for us the people of Zion, is to not destroy and discourage us, but rather its

design is to encourage unto renewal of thought and practice...conform and reform our minds to its wisdom.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Rom.12:2

Thus, do not walk out of here today with your heads low in a defeated sense of apathy, feeling as though there is no hope of meaningful change in your family dynamic, rather recall this central design and principal of Scripture (inspired and preserved by your Covenant keeping God) that through it you “may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

HOW TO IDENTIFY A CHILD CENTERED HOME

Prior to listening some identifying factors of a child centered home, lets fist obtain a working definition. “A child-centered home is one in which a child believes and is allowed to behave as though the household (schedule, events/activities, meals, parents, siblings) exist exclusively, for the most part...to satisfy the desires of the child.”¹

Now, allow me to pause and say very plainly, that although I may not know every individual child and/or teenager in the Church as intimately as I would like, I do none the less through general observations and cordial conversations detect that not one of you would want to be identified as the type of child I just described. – GIVE AN EXAMPLE.

Jesus in the gospel of Matthew (7:16-20) gives us a principal of identification which utilizes fruit. For example, He says in v. 20 “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” And, so it is with the child centered home. There will be fruit (or rather) practices/actions that when honestly observed help us to identify if we have unfortunately

¹ Lou Priolo “*The Heart of Anger*” Grace and Truth Books; Sand Springs, OK

allowed our home to shift from its intended purpose of being God-centered to being child-centered.

Let's examine a list of ten fruits exhibited in a home where such a shift has or has begun to occur:

1. The child interrupts their parents when they are talking, often times cutting in with their opinions about statements made by their parents.
2. The child uses manipulation and/or rebellion to get their way.
3. More than often child/children take precedence over the needs of the spouse.
4. Child is given (although unconsciously) an equal or overriding vote or input in decision making matters.
5. Child is allowed to choose their punishment.
6. Child demands excessive time and attention from parents to the detriment of other biblical responsibilities of parents.
7. Children more than often is allowed to escape consequences of outright sinful and irresponsible behavior.
8. Child frequently speaks to parents like as if they are peers.
9. Usually the children are allowed to be the dominant influence and direction in the home and activities.
10. Children are entertained and coddled out of a grumpy/bad mood (rather than biblically disciplined).

Now, if after honest reflection there is a child here today that finds themselves doing any of these things, you ought to repent and seek the Lord and ask for the wisdom of His word to help you change your sinful, self-centered behavior. In fact the Bible encourages you to ask for such wisdom "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5 However, if on the other hand you refuse to acknowledge the truth about yourself and ignore the admonition of the apostle James to pray for

wisdom, then the truly sobering and frightful thought is that the longer you persist in such behavior the harder your heart will become unto your own calamity. “How blessed is the man who fears always, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.” Prov.28:14

HOW TO IDENTIFY A GOD-CENTERED HOME

Having identified the child-centered home, let us now on the other hand consider the God-centered home. A God-centered home is a home largely patterned after what we learn in Genesis 2:24 “For this cause (marriage) shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh”.

“This verse is perhaps the most important specific verse on the family in the entire family.”² It is repeated three additional times in Scripture. It is also the least often followed. Virtually all marriage and family problems can be traced back to a failure to leave one’s parents, cleave to one’s spouse, or a failure to become one flesh with one’s spouse.

When two people leave their respective homes to establish a new home for Christ, they become a family long before any children arrive. When children are added, by God’s blessing, both Mother and Father become the heads of a new decision-making unit. This unit is not a democracy. The husband (according to the Scriptures) is the head of this decision-making unit and his wife is his God-given helper. (Gen. 2:18; Eph. 5:23)

As children are born, they are welcomed into the pre-existing family, but not as part of the decision-making unit. In other words, they are part of the family, but they are not one flesh with the parents.

According to Scripture, the relationship between husband and wife is a permanent relationship which is not to ever be broken (Matt.19:3-6). The authority / submission relationship between parents

² Ibid. pg.25

and this child is a temporary one which eventually is to be broken according to Genesis 2:24. One day, Lord willing, the children will also leave home to start their own homes. Therefore, the relationship between a husband and wife is their priority relationship in the home. The relationship between parents and children and between siblings are indeed important, but always secondary.

Having identified the importance of Gen. 2:24 and the primacy of the one-flesh relationship which is shared between the Mother & Father, let's now consider:

ONE OF THE MAIN CONCEPTS OF THE GOD-CENTERED HOME

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” (1 COR.6:20)

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 COR. 10:31)

This is one of the main concepts that lies at the heart of a God-centered home...the biblical principle that the purpose of every Christian is to glorify God.

Consider with me, that in contrast to the child-centered home, where satisfying and serving the children is what largely drives the household, the God-centered home is one in which EVERYONE is committed to pleasing and serving God's will – as it is revealed in His Word. In this home, God's desires are exalted over everyone else's! Everyone in the family may be expected to sacrifice personal desires and pleasures if God's will in Scripture requires it.

This biblical framework teaches children to serve and sacrifice, rather than be served. It teaches to give honor rather than be honored, to give (be loving and/or nice) rather than to take (being selfish).

Coming back to the fruit bearing principle taught by Christ let's consider a different sort of list in contrast to the one before. In a God-centered home, children are taught (among other things) the following:

1. To joyfully serve others (starting w/ siblings).

2. To cheerfully obey their parents the first time they are asked to do something.
3. To never interrupt their parents when they are speaking.
4. To understand they will not always get their way, and no amount of manipulation will be tolerated.
5. To work their schedule/wants/desires around their parent's schedule.
6. To give input into decisions when requested, but not necessarily an equal vote.
7. To understand that God has given their parents other responsibilities in addition to meeting their basic needs.
8. To expect to suffer biblical consequences for their sinful and irresponsible behavior.
9. To not speak to parents as though they were peers but honor them as spiritual authorities.
10. To esteem others as more important than yourselves.
11. To fulfill various household responsibilities (chores) diligently and thoroughly as if doing them unto the Lord.
12. To be on guard from certain un-biblical influences.
13. To not attempt to manipulate or divide parents over disciplinary issues.
14. To never be more intimate with either parent than the parents are with each other.

After considering the fruits of the two types of homes, which would you say best describes you. The God centered home or the child centered home. Perhaps like many of us, we see a little of both reflected in our own families and such a talk like this will help 'hit' the reset button on some things that we need to pray about and begin tiding up.

In closing I want to address specifically the brethren of the church while going back to the pattern and importance of Gen. 2:24 and our crucial role as the heads of our home's spiritual unit, lets us take the lead in the disciplining and discipling of our children. Shame on us men, if we are

allowing our children to think and act out in sinful ways while we turn a slothful blind eye to it. May the God's of all mercy, strength and long-suffering equip us to do what He calls us to do.

All glory to His name – Amen.