

Encouragement to
Christian Men and their
Households

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The Times we are living in

⁷ *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. **Hebrews 11:7 (NIV)***

We are living in trying and troublesome times. May we consider what God shares with us through the scriptures concerning unhealthy attitudes and lifestyles? He said in II Timothy 3:1-4, *but mark this: ¹There will be terrible times in the last days. ²People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. (NIV)*

These kinds of attitudes and lifestyles are present in our day. They are opened and exposed to the members of our households, from a secular culture. Having this in mind, it is critical that we discuss with our families, the degree to which evil is expressed in the world. As leaders of our households, we

must be aware of how these kinds of practices can also affect our sensitivity to spiritual matters. They can entice us to live selfishly and, in turn, neglect the spiritual and emotional needs of our families. We must be determined to persevere and remain committed to our faith in Jesus Christ. Pay close attention to God's words in II Peter 1:3-10, *3His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 5For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. 10Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall. (NIV)*

The above verses are loaded with enriching wisdom and direction from our Heavenly Father to help us live in this ungodly world. Notice the underlined statements and how they instruct us to focus on spiritual living. They exhort, encourage, and admonish us to take action. We cannot passively sit by and allow the forces of evil to pull our families from under godly influence. Therefore, a careful evaluation of our own lives in Christ and where we are placing our attention will help us in our leadership roles as husbands and fathers.

It is important that we give attention to God's wisdom and teach the scriptures to our wives and children. Our fidelity toward the work and service of our Lord is always being tested. Let us incorporate the attitude of our beloved brother Noah (referenced in the opening scripture, page 1). He guided his family into safety through his obedience and sensitivity concerning the instructions of God. He was a symbol given to each one of us as to how we should remain steadfast in focusing our families.

Standing up and Living a Committed Life

Utilizing God's Word will provide a pathway of safety and enlightenment for our families. It is filled with godly wisdom, knowledge, and solutions for every subject of life. It can be used to train the mind concerning godliness, doctrine, and instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16-17). God's Word trumps every philosophy and principle that proceeds from secular enticements. It is our manual and blueprint in leading our families as followers of Jesus Christ. We must be very careful of information that attempts to persuade us into the flesh. All sorts of things are published through various means to logically appeal to the mind.

We are living in an age where information is at our fingertips. We can research practically any subject and come away with information. This does not mean that it is profitable for our spiritual lives in Christ. We must be mindful that God supplied our spiritual needs through the writing of the Holy Bible. It is the most powerful book in the entire world. This is the book that can successfully enlighten our minds concerning

what is morally acceptable to a Holy God. It is truth! It does not need to experiment or research to develop a hypothesis. It has already finished its findings and has searched out every detail of mankind before the world began. In John 17:1-5, Jesus speaks to His Father about an existence He had before the world began.

¹ These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: ² As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. ³ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. ⁴ I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. (KJV)

Notice that verses four and five make reference to the work that Jesus finished and the glory that He had before He came into our world. This speaks to an existence that is far beyond human thought and understanding. It is this life that Jesus came to give us, that we may comprehend a way of life that far exceeds the perils of our physical existence. It is this life that establishes, builds hope, and offers complete peace. It is

this life that we have inherited through salvation. It is this life that gives us perspective and helps us become better men for our families. It is this life that is constantly being challenged by the secular one we wake up to every morning.

The sour and sensual wisdom from the world attempts to invade our minds every chance that it gets. This is why we must protect our minds and be mindful of what is attempting to feed our thoughts. God's Word needs to be renewed in our minds daily if we are to have any success at winning for our thoughts. We cannot be apathetic about living in this secular culture. The direction of our families depends on what we process in our minds. If we are thinking selfishly we will lead our families from impure motives. If we are allowing God's Words to affect change in our minds, then we will lead our families concerning God's best interest.

Every day that we go out into this secular world our minds are the targets of evil forces. They want to conquer our minds by feeding them self-centered thoughts and suggestions. Their tactic is to focus the man on selfish ambitions, above

what is spiritually best for his family. These forces want to lead the man away from Christ-centered thinking by appealing to his sense of logic. They have studied us and know that we are logical thinkers. They know that we tend to gravitate toward what is literal and makes sense. They know that we do not lean toward abstract concepts but what appears to be real and what is right in front of us. Their enticements are logical and practical.

The way we defeat them is to evaluate and ask ourselves one important question, “Will this move me from my Christ-centered position?” No matter what idea or thought comes to our minds, we must seek our leader, Jesus Christ. We must remember, He is our Lord, Savior, Teacher, and Mentor. Furthermore, we have a Heavenly Father that Jesus told us to pray to in His (Jesus’) name for all of life’s situations. If that was not enough, God’s written word is filled with encouragement to make God’s knowledge primary, over selfish enticements. Here are a few passages that exhort us to stay with God’s position on earthly matters. Take a look at what they are speaking to us today as leaders of our households:

⁵Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV)

³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) ⁵Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; ⁶And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. II Corinthians 10:3-6 (KJV)

These passages employ words such as heart, understanding, direct, imaginations, and knowledge. All of these make a direct correlation with our minds. These passages instruct and admonish us to lean toward God's insight over nonspiritual reasoning. As stated earlier, evil forces want to appeal to our sense of logic by making self-centered appeals to our minds. These forces use many of the things that are in our daily travels. They have studied human beings and know that our minds are magnets for all sorts of information.

God knows that we live in this world and how He created our minds to function. He knows we will come into contact with various sources of information; He wants us to be careful with what types we are processing. God knows that our minds are repositories for our thoughts, which can generate actions or behaviors. This is why God cautions us to protect our hearts in Proverbs 4:23, *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.* The heart and mind of a man is his central place of decision. Everything about him will proceed from this area of his life. He is no more than the sum total of his thoughts (*Proverbs 23:7*). This is why evil forces go after our minds. They want us to process the wrong kinds of suggestions and information. They want to inflate us with self-centered thinking and speak lies to our minds that we are our own gods. Please read what happened to the man and his wife in Genesis 3:1-6. Evil forces have not changed their approach and their tactics are the same. Our responsibility is to stay under the lordship of Jesus Christ and rely on God's Words. Jesus showed us how to defeat the enticement of evil forces. He is our example of how

to use a spiritual mind to overcome temptation. Take a look at how He did it.

¹ Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. ² And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. ³ And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. ⁴ But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. ⁵ Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ⁷ Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. ⁸ Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹ And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. ¹⁰ Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. ¹¹ Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. Matthew 4:1-11 (KJV)

Notice on three separate occasions, the devil came after the mind of Jesus attempting to allure Him into self-centered thinking. The devil did not realize that Jesus was determined to rely on His Father's words, above pleasing the flesh. He started off with three dynamic words, "*It is written.*" His mind was renewed with His Father's words and He used them to defeat not only Satan's temptations, but also the suggestions that were attempting to feed His thoughts.

As leaders of our households it is critical that we also model what it means to live a dedicated and committed life to Christian values. God wants our families to look at our ways of living as an example for their learning. That is what it means to be considered the leader or head of our families. If we want to be successful in leading our families then we must be willing to yield and submit to God's Words. There are too many men who are dispirited and make excuses for why they lack commitment to God. We need men who will show their families what it truly means to live a committed life to Christ, regardless of personal challenges or trials. Too many Christian men are losing ground with their families due to compromising

and neglectful attitudes. We need strong examples of what it means to be loyal and devoted to the cause of Jesus Christ.

Two Dangerous Areas we must stay away from

We should pay close attention to the areas of pride and selfishness. These are two serious traps set for us to detour us away from successfully leading our families. Pride refers to a self-sufficient or self-reliant attitude. Selfishness refers to self-centered thinking or behaving. If we fall into these areas, it is possible that we could neglect our responsibilities and duties to our families. A prideful and self-centered attitude will cause our families to suffer and go through emotional strain. Our children will become lost and disheartened; our wives will grow bitter and angry; the Holy Spirit will grieve, and we will regress morally. Each one of us as leaders in our families cannot afford to have this happen.

We must pay attention when we start sensing that pride and self-centeredness are beginning to arise within us. Once we recognize the beginning of these harmful areas we must appeal to our Lord Jesus for His help. When pride and self-

centeredness have taken hold of a man it will be hard for him to come out of it alone. Depending on the degree of difficulty, it may be necessary to seek counsel from spiritual leadership. The goal is to seek direction concerning a Christ-centered life. This is the only way (*John 14:6*). Every man owes it to God, himself, and his family to stay under the authority of Jesus Christ.

Our families should be at the top of our list of priorities. When times get tough, and they will, let us remember the patriarch Noah, who was relentless in building and leading his family to see a better day. Consider Noah's position as a husband, father, and messenger of God. Meditate on the position he took and what it must have taken to keep persevering in the face of temptation and enticement from the world in his day. It is important that we reflect on our own situations and look to God for His help. There will be times when you will have to intercede and cry out to the Lord concerning His perfect will for your family. There will be times when you may start to notice resistance from your family, but you cannot handle them by the flesh. It will only create tension

between you and your family. In Galatians 6:8, a comparison is made of two natures and the results that come behind investing in one or the other. *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (KJV).*

We will need to use spiritual thinking and application when difficult situations arise within our families. This will invite God's presence into our matters. We will need to apply the Fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*) in order to remain composed and godly in our characters. We cannot use frustration, anger, and aggression as a means to bring order to our families. These tactics will only infuse more distress and cause the peace of God to lift, which will invite division into our families.

Today's Christian man would do good to revisit the biblical characters of men who persisted in the face of obstacles and declared a stand in moving their families forward. They, too, had challenges and temptations seeking to distract them

from what was important, yet many of them remained focused for their families.

Conclusion

Let us persevere and depend on the Lord Jesus Christ in moving our families forward, while living in the midst of a secular culture. It is vital that we trust in God's word and communicate our hearts to Him in prayer. We should also protect our minds from unwanted and foreign suggestions that originate from the forces of evil. Finally, rely on the knowledge of God and His wisdom when interacting with the members of our families. The condition of future generations will depend on faithful fathers today, who are willing to commit to a Christ-centered life.

Sources

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