

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."
(Matthew 18:19,20)*



SECTION 5 - LESSON 33

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth:

- *God-given Unchangeable Characteristics*
- *Why We Need Fathers*



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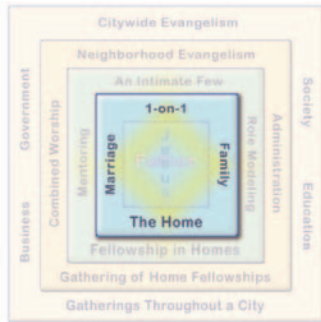
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THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth:

God-given Unchangeable Characteristics

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”
(Psalms 139:14).

In Lesson 30 we discussed the ways in which gender and genetic influences create differences in individuals. These influences were implanted by God within your frame before you were born. If you don't fully appreciate these very unique facets which constitute YOU, you're going to have problems trusting your Creator.

If you want to experience relational intimacy with your spouse, you need to humbly recognize and appreciate how very different he or she is from you. That's the only way you can live cooperatively with each other in loving union.

A number of God-given unchangeable characteristics comprise the person you are. Only He could explain to you His reasons for endowing you with these particular elements in the way He has:

1. Your physical features.
2. Your mental capabilities.
3. Your parents.
4. Your gender.
5. Your birth order.
6. Your brothers and sisters.
7. Your nationality.
8. Your race.
9. Your time in history.
10. Your aging and life span.

[from the Institute in Basic Life Principles Seminar]¹

You may be among the many who have struggled for years to come to grips with one or more of these unchangeable characteristics that help to identify you. Your refusal to accept any of these from your Father's hand creates a heart atmosphere of distrust in God, a condition which plays right into Satan's schemes.

Over time, distrust in our Lord breeds a host of other problems in your pilgrimage to salvation. And once again, the most frequent trap Satan sets for those who rail against the way they're made is bitterness and resentment.

Go through the above unchangeables list slowly and thoroughly. Which ones inspire negative feelings in you? Describe why.

It's important for you on your pilgrimage to salvation to free yourself from any dissatisfaction you have with these God-given characteristics. Repent and/or go to the people from whom you need to ask forgiveness for having blamed them for who you are.

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth: *Why We Need Fathers*

"He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, or else I will come and strike the land with a curse"
(Malachi 4:6).

The Older Testament closes with the prophet's twofold promise and warning. Both generations have a choice: Fathers can allow their hearts to be turned to nurture and train their children, and children to lovingly submit and learn from their fathers. Otherwise, all will suffer the consequences from God's hand.

Since Satan is well aware of God's restoration intent, what do you think he's been doing to sunder the connection between fathers and children? Agitating couples to the point of divorce!

Earlier in Malachi God emphatically warns, *"I hate divorce!"* (2:16). The aftermath on children of broken marriage covenants has been devastating. Children of today know more about how to break up than they do about reconciling differences. The incidence of divorce is only likely to increase proportionally to the numbers of children impacted by its sorrow.

Studies of children of divorce have demonstrated that the absence of fathers leaves a tragic void all the way into adulthood, particularly among the

young men who populate this nation's prisons—a statistic rising to epidemic proportions. What can we as followers of Jesus do to help stem the hemorrhage? With our own children and those with whom we have relationship we can:

- Reaffirm by word, by prayer and by role modeling how critical maintaining a marriage covenant is.
- Come alongside children of divorce and help them to embrace our Father's Covenant and discover ways to live righteously with forgiving hearts.
- Expend extra loving effort on behalf of adult children of divorce, especially those who are married, in identifying areas of their lives that are ripe for transformation by the Spirit of Jesus.

The vital role that fathers play in the healthy development of their children needs to be shouted from the rooftops in this gender-confused culture. Numerous studies in recent decades have confirmed both the positive effects of healthy father/child relationships, and the crushing effects of a hostile or absent father.

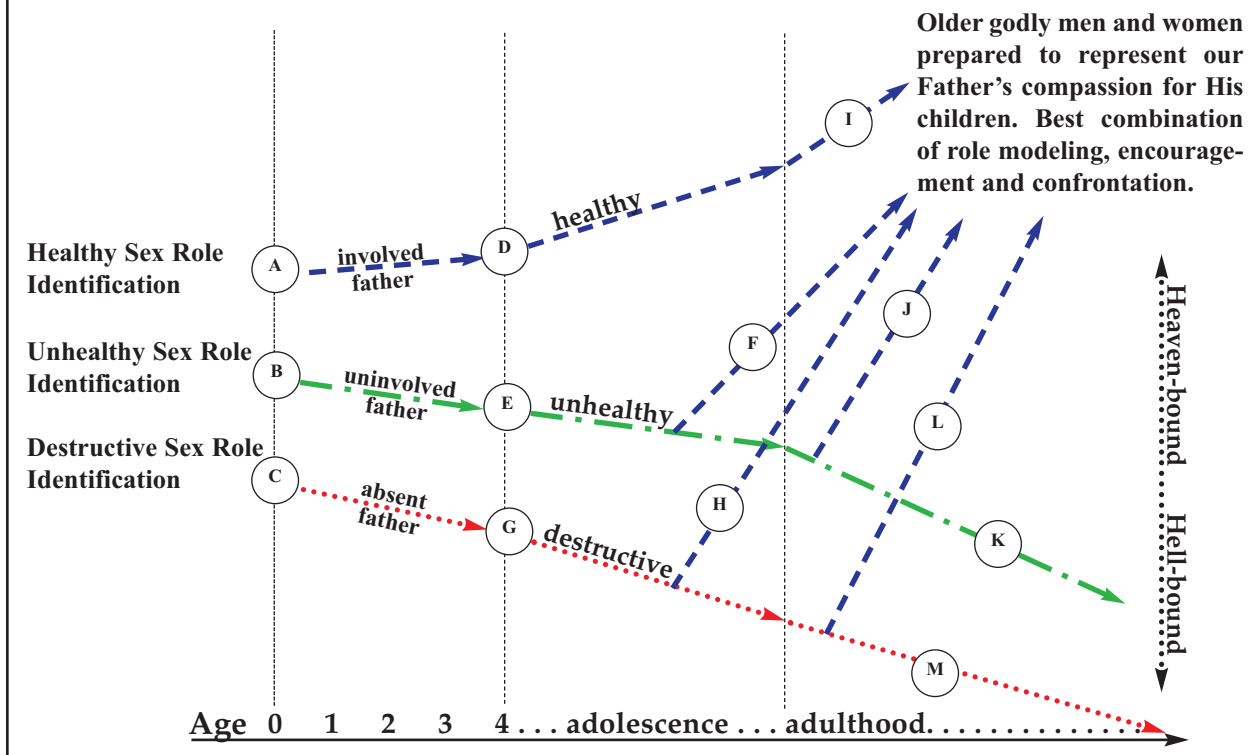
Please refer to the diagram at the top of the next page as we discuss the effect of fathers on their children.

Age 0-4

A significant season of father influence occurs very early in a child's life. Legitimate studies of children over the past 50 years have shown consistently the crucial influence that **involved fathers** have on the lives of their children. Critically, between birth and the age of 4 the presence of a father enables children, both boys and girls, to develop appropriate **sex-role identification**.

How The Influence Of Fathers On Children Affects Their Adulthood

Factors that affect marriage, parenting, and leading the extended spiritual family of home fellowship



Don't think that just because a child has particular sex organs, he or she will respond appropriately to their gender. A father's presence and interaction is crucial to a child's identifying with the role enactment of his or her gender. [We highly recommend *Bringing Up Boys* by Dr. James Dobson for specific studies and insights on young males in particular.]

In our diagram above, **Group A** represents an involved father raising healthy boys and girls. A father's effect on his children before the age of 4 can't be overstated. The lasting fruit of his involvement is almost miraculous! These children will grow up with healthy sex role identities.

Stop and consider how important that is for the rest of their lives. Even a *consistently involved* father-figure (grandfather, uncle, close male family friend who takes a personal interest in the child, coach)

can be of great help if bonding between the children and the man takes place.

In **Group B**, the father is present, but for a variety of reasons, is uninvolved in raising his children, or interacts with them in a somewhat negative way. Even an uninvolved father is generally more beneficial than no father or father-figure in the child's life.

The situation is still unhealthy, however, often leaving some *unresolved identity problems* for the child later in life. For instance, one unhealthy aspect brought about by an uninvolved father is that a boy may become a *Momma's boy*. You may have seen the studies which reveal the destructive impact that a *dominant mother / weak or uninvolved father* relationship can bring on their sons.

Even the nicest single-parent mother can end up dominating both her sons and daughters if no influential male

comes alongside to reinforce appropriate masculine interaction and role modeling.

Later in life **Group B** boys face major hurdles when they go through tough times. Rather than learning perseverance they seek *empathy*, finding someone to identify with how bad they feel. Their lives revolve more around their raw emotions than in doing what is right and responsible. They avoid correction wherever possible, and often find it difficult to submit to authority of any kind. They avoid men who might admonish them, and seek out women who will offer them consolation.

A married man in this situation this only exacerbates his inability or unwillingness to fulfill his responsibilities in the marriage covenant.² Suffice it to say that access to godly male role models who are willing to encourage and confront these men toward sanctification processes can greatly benefit their lives.

The daughters of uninvolved fathers who have no other father-figure in their life become **controlling** and develop an **independent spirit**. Sadly, these two characteristics are emblems of the feminist movement today.

To their own detriment they're more susceptible to becoming sexually active at an early age and promiscuous. With each failed relationship these girls become more emotionally hardened. Too frequently intercourse becomes a means of control and manipulation rather than an experience of intimacy.

When a woman who has had no father-figure marries, she often has difficulty maintaining and enjoying marital intimacy with her husband. Domination, manipulation and a resistant spirit surface rather than a submissive spirit toward either God or her husband.

Deep, trusting intimacy with her husband is elusive. Only an understanding husband and the deep work of sanctification through the Spirit can help them discover the union our Lord desires for their relationship.

Group C are children who were raised without fathers or a father-figure. An exhaustive study 35 years ago reported that children raised without a father's (or father-figure's) influence in the 0-4 age range have a 75% greater chance of becoming homosexuals and lesbians. Studies also reveal that mothers have *no effect at all* in males developing healthy sex-role identification.

A child raised only with female influence before the age of 4 will face great difficulty developing appropriate gender identification. A boy needs to first *dis-identify* with the femaleness of his mother in order to then identify with being a male like his father.³ If no significant male is part of his life, that developmental step is stunted.

There is a distinct correlation between the increase in divorce and homosexuality/lesbianism in the past 5 decades.⁴ Recognizing the need for healthy male influence, several states have stopped automatically giving custody of young children of divorce to their mother.

Another tragic consequence of boys being denied the influence of fathers or father-figures has been the ever-increasing incidence of rape. Both homosexuals and rapists have this in common: *Both lack proper sex-role identification*. The absence of fathers has condemned countless boys to become men who not only fail to fulfill their God-given sex role, but also exact revenge on women. Rape isn't about sexual gratification; it's vengeful anger that erupts into violence.

Please anchor this key point: The complete absence of a father or influential father-figure has shown itself to be the most destructive environment in general for a child age 0-4.

Age 4 through Adolescence

To remain on a healthy track, **Group D** (with involved fathers or father-figures) will need other adults, especially males, who can support the father in the corrective processes that lead to maturity. In the early church this was provided by extended family and other adults in the spiritual family that met in one another's homes.

In healthy tribal societies the grandparents and uncles and aunts within the clan provide this support. This is an important consideration for leaders in home fellowship families—*spiritual clans*—as they intentionally walk in the biblical “one-anothers” (e.g., teach one another) to raise up the next generation *together*.

Group B (uninvolved father) has a choice in this time frame. If these children lack the influence of appropriate males in positions of loving authority, they'll continue to focus on self-centered pursuits (**K**).

With regrettable impact on the Christian community, when many of these boys become men they'll be leaders in faith communities. They'll enjoy relationships as long as they are *in charge*. Their absence of male role-modeling makes them non-confrontive but popular in an effeminate religious system. They enjoy friendliness *without the accountability* that healthy intergenerational faith communities enjoy.

The **E>K** person has inordinate need for recognition. These are the willing “warm bodies” that seeker-friendly churches attract to keep their religious

system growing.

Emotionally needy, they participate for their *own benefit or recognition*. Many of these individuals are prey to the “Judas syndrome”: *On the surface they're relationally close to you as long as they benefit by it. But, when increased accountability or difficult circumstances arise, they'll let you down or even turn on you.*

Group F are those who for one reason or another are involved in situations that confront and challenge their attitudes and behavior. Participation in sports or activities under healthy coaching or an after-school job with good supervision can help change a young person to grow responsibly. Military service can help in that respect as well.

Sue and I both came from the **B>E>F** track. Coaches, teachers, jobs and the military were instrumental in maturing us to be responsible and to respond correctly to authority. After we came to Christ, godly older mentors along our life path helped us even more.

The same factors that positively influence **B>E>F** children can help (**G**) individuals get on the (**H**) track. Destructive paths *can* be altered in the right relational environment. Remember the words of encouraging hope Jesus offered, “*With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*” (Matthew 19:26).

Because of His love, God will intervene in order to confront people who are going astray. And, when they enter into Covenant with our Father, through His lifelong sanctification process He'll transform their character to conform to that of Jesus.

Refusing to yield to the rightful authority of others is a chief obstacle in the path

of those who have no father relationship. Rebelling against anyone “telling them what to do”, so many of these young people, males especially, give way to addictions and violence.⁵

Within faith communities these individuals need intense personal help from those who are older and more mature in their faith. Large relational gaps need to be filled in: how to get along with others in a godly way, and how to yield to the input of godly elders, for example.

Adulthood. . .

In adulthood, **Group I** will continue to grow in responsibility. They won't duck correction but will welcome it for their own betterment as well as for the good of others. Spiritually mature men and women with a servant's attitude are so important to the well-being of the faith communities our Lord is restoring. The sanctification process and altar experiences are recognized as opportunities to be more like Jesus and to complete His purposes.

Adults in **Groups K** or **M** can still change to follow the path of **(J)** and **(L)**, respectively. However, transformation is harder in adulthood, and requires intense focus on sanctification and diligent encouragement and confrontation by others who are committed to that person relationally and in spirit.

Group K, those who don't want to change but like the sense of religious participation, represent the greatest percentage of people in large “church growth” communities. They're attracted to congregations that use entertainment and activities to keep their interest.

These folks prefer easy, lighthearted messages from the pulpit because they're unlikely to search the Scriptures for themselves. They fill singles' groups and affini-

ty programs of those who share common interests. Godly confrontation and conviction disturb them, and they don't last long in settings in which this occurs.

Those who aren't serious about a biblical relationship with God are the “market” the leaders of “seeker-friendly” congregations attract. Enjoyable music and pleasurable sermons that avoid conviction of sin give the illusion of worship. And, vicariously sitting in proximity to many others gives a sense of belonging. But, these individuals will never mature in Jesus, nor will they press on in the Way that leads to salvation.

The writer to the Hebrews addresses this group who wallow in immaturity and don't want to change. He rebukes them for their spiritual complacency and resistance to walk in the righteous living that following Jesus entails:

*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are **slow to learn**. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to **teach you the elementary truths of God's word** all over again.*

*You need **milk**, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is **not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness**. But solid food is for the **mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil** (Hebrews 5:11-14).*

Group K individuals also represent the majority of lonesome divorced/remarried/redivorced individuals who want to belong to *someone* but don't want to learn or practice the boundaries of healthy relationships. Many flock to counselors who supply temporary relief with their empathy. Most, however, avoid

at all cost those who would confront them in Christ's love and hold them accountable to follow His way.

In recent decades Satan has infiltrated home fellowships with people in this category who use their discontent to divide the spiritual family and sow seeds of alienation. This is especially true for non-Hebraic style groups. Most practice an "open door" policy for their gatherings so that anyone, regardless of their relationship with Jesus, can attend and voice whatever they wish.

Satan will send as many **Group K** types as he can to wear down faith communities. His goal is to emotionally callous those within the setting of what is intended to be relational intimacy.

This outcome is comparable to the **(B)** girl who grows calloused through fornicating. After several **(K)** people pass through a faith community, those who remain are less likely to extend warmth to other newcomers. **Group K** refuses to yield to biblical authority or accept correction. **As long as they get their way, they stay.**

Group M are the unrepentant: *"the homosexuals, those who misuse drugs in connection with the occult, the sexually immoral, murderers, idol-worshippers, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood"* (Revelation 22:15). Homosexual and New Age congregations that deny the clear truth of the Word have sprung up abundantly to cater to **Group M**.

During our retreat center days we met C>G>L people who had been homosexuals and lesbians but were changed through repentance and God's wonderful healing power. Many were blessed with strong marriages and loving families.

No one who responds to His Spirit and repents is beyond His reach. Our Lord is in the business of reconciling to

Himself those who wholeheartedly seek Him and repent!

A observation from our research:

Recently I [Mike] spent time with two men with whom I've had a close relationship for several years. To my inner joy they both expressed how much my counsel had helped them stop being "Momma's boys." Both of these guys are over 40, and all through life had purposely avoided male authority and correction. However, once the truth of the Hebraic foundations penetrated their heart, each one saw his need to change.

The Momma's boy epidemic in this country is the fruit of effeminized public education. In its feminist goal to minimize the influence of fathers in the lives of their children, families have been devastated.

So much of a young boy's life is now surrounded by women, particularly during the energetic years in which the mandate to "sit quietly and obediently absorb" is a biological challenge to these kids. The National Education Association has just about succeeded in its humanism-based agenda: a godless, amoral society in which the biblical family as God designed it is destroyed.

Our Lord purposed for marriage to fulfill an intent dear to His heart: *"He was seeking godly offspring"* (Malachi 2:15). Since God's goal is to produce godly generations, Satan's is the opposite. His ally? Godless public education. [See our Hebraic article, [He Has Showed You](#), for more on our Lord's perspective on raising godly generations.]

Much of contemporary western Christendom has followed the example of public education as young men are distanced from meaningful older male role models. Can you picture the tragedy

here? Legions of young men who've had limited or no healthy relationship with godly men are producing offspring themselves and have no idea how to effectively parent them.

When we discuss Hebraic home fellowship families in later lessons, you'll discover the vital component of *intergenerational access* for both men and women. Younger men in particular are able to learn from mature men who have already passed through earlier stages of development and maturation and gleaned wisdom from victories as well as reverses.

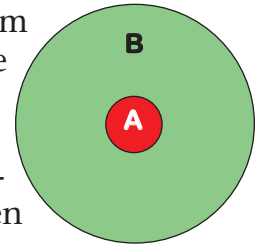
How do you recognize a "Momma's boy"?

1. He is always looking for *recognition* in everything he does. That motivation may be camouflaged, but it's there all the same: "Momma, Momma, look at me!"—and "Momma" might be his wife, his boss, even his buddies.
2. He consistently looks for people who will *empathize* when his feelings are hurt. He often has a "hang dog" expression when things don't go his way. He's just waiting for someone to ask what's wrong so he can receive emotional support. He'll do anything to avoid the accountability and confrontation that a mature man would provide.
3. He is *controlled* and *manipulated* by the women in his life. He's fearful of displeasing them, and can't face the turmoil any confrontation with them might entail. So many Momma's boys are prisoners in their own marriage because they fear their wives more than they fear God. The spouse of a Momma's boy over time becomes more his mother than his wife.

Group K: Mothering: Fear & Control

Group K has produced an epidemic of women who are blinded by domination, manipulation and a resistant spirit. When the (K) woman marries she'll often chose to *mother her husband* rather than fulfill her biblical role as her husband's life companion and helper.

This woman is plagued by fear and control. She's hindered from seeing the whole picture of things going on around her. Her *incomplete view* causes her to hurt the feelings of those close to her. **Circle A** represents the sum of variables *she's willing to pay attention to*. She sees life only from her narrow vantage point, and is unwilling to receive input from others. She's also reluctant to fully yield to men who are in authority.



The *totality of variables* that affect a situation are contained in **Circle B**. ALL of the variables represented by **B** must be taken into consideration if everyone is to benefit from the decisions.

You can recognize a (K) wife or mother because her **Circle A** is like a hoop that others must jump through. In other words, she frames in her mind the only way others can please her. Even if you have the most loving intentions, if you approach her or show her kindness *outside her A hoop*, she can't receive it. All she perceives as loving is her circle's reference point, and she's unappreciative because you missed it.

Now that you have some fresh insights, please fill in these questions and discuss your answers with your spouse and/or others close to you in the faith.

On the diagram on page 3, *How The Influence Of Fathers On Children Affects Their Adulthood*, write the path of your own life using the appropriate letter code. _____ (Ours was B>E>F).

Describe the key events and circumstances that got you where you are today. Include any meaningful people and their impact on your life.

* If you're in Group K, can you look back and see God's attempts through particular encounters or situations to help you change?

Almost all the senior adults with whom we speak are in Group K. Their desire for the pleasures of retirement seduced them, even those who once were on the A>D>I path. If you're one of these, describe how you got enticed into self-gratification.

* If you're a parent or grandparent, talk about your history with your children and grandchildren, and what they can learn from your life choices.

On a spectrum, would you consider your faith community to be biblically conservative or secularly liberal? If you're a man, do you have close relationships with other men who

are able and willing to confront you if need be?

Reread our description of a "Momma's boy". Do any of the statements apply to you? Yes or no? If yes, in what ways do they apply, and how has your "Momma's boy" status compromised your other relationships?

Do your children show more respect to your wife than they do to you? To whom do they go for permission? Do they or your wife ever hide information from you or go around your back to get their way?

Are you able to love your wife as Jesus would no matter how she treats you? Yes or no? If yes, how do you demonstrate this level of love to her?

When you're hurt by your spouse, do you withhold affection from him or her? Or, do you go to Jesus for the strength to love your spouse even if he or she never changes? Describe your response when you've been hurt by your spouse.

If you're a woman, does any of the Group K mothering description apply to you? Yes or no? If yes, describe your interaction with your spouse, children or close friends. Do you often fail to see the whole picture? Ask others close to you for input.

Are you a woman who tends to mother her husband? Do you take control of areas in which the Bible has assigned *him* responsibility? In particular, are you anxious about family finances? Has it occurred to you that your control is destroying the intimacy in your marriage? Are you willing to cry out to God for inner change (sanctification)?

Can your husband give you input without feeling apprehensive about your response? Do you always have to get your own way, or do you concede but pout or withdraw affection? Do your decisions really consider the feelings and values of others? (See Proverbs 14:1.)

Are you a woman who can't trust your husband because of your past? Are you quick to point out faults in your husband or in other men, thinking, "Isn't that just like a man?"

Are you a meddling mother-in-law? Have you had a hand in hindering or dissolving the marriage covenant of one of your children? What do you need to do about this?

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