

Teaching E-mail 63
Are You Deceiving Yourself?

*“A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown,
but she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones” (Proverbs 12:4).*

(March 6, 2012)

Introduction

You’re probably familiar with the “wife of noble character” extolled in Proverbs 31:10-31. The heart of her husband can fully trust her because she “does him good and not evil all the days of her life” (31:11,12). But what about the wife who brings shame to her husband, one whom he can’t fully trust in their relationship?

The wife who shames her husband humiliates him so painfully that deep within him—in his very bones—he’s humiliated. Strong emotions of grief and distrust fill his heart because he never knows when she’s going to say or do something that demeans him. And if a wife can have such a grievous effect on her mate, what kind of disrespect toward him is she fostering in their children?

We are two seniors who’ve been married 42 years and served our Lord for over 3 decades in various forms of ministry. With that in mind, we’d like to discuss with you ladies in particular something that weighs heavily on our hearts.

In just half our lifetime we’ve observed the rampant destruction of marriage after marriage for a multitude of reasons. Most concerning to us has been the unbridled dissolution of marriage covenants within Christendom. A vow made before God to stay together “til death do us part” has been rationalized away especially by so many women to mean “til we’re better off apart”, or, “til I’M better off without you.”

And sadly, all too many women are quick to cast blame on their husbands rather than ask themselves, “**How did I**

fail my husband in what my Father knew he needed as his helper and life partner? What was my part in allowing this relationship to tear apart?” Most mothers anguish if their children have to grow up fatherless. Yet did that consideration fully impact the moms *before* they gave up on their marriage?

Let’s be clear. We’re *not* excusing fathers and husbands. We’ll deal with them in a future Teaching E-mail. We’re intentionally following a pattern we see often in the Bible. When God wants to address husbands and wives, He speaks to the woman first (as in 1 Peter 3:1-7 and Ephesians 5:22-33, for example). Then He deals with the man.

The phrase “I’ve been abused” is used a lot today, especially in regard to domestic violence and discord. Generally men are cited as the perpetrators since they more often react with physical violence in the home than women do. But we want to discuss some factors instigated by mothers and grandmothers that can be just as devastating to a child’s total well-being. Let’s explore this.

We hope you’ve had an opportunity to read Teaching E-mail 61. ***Are You Our Lord’s Intervener in the Life of Others?*** In the last two pages we included a self-evaluation sheet for parents and grandparents. We designed this to help them determine whether their current intervention in their child(ren)’s life has *positive, neutral, or negative* results. Over the years we’ve come to recognize a sinister flaw in women that’s been heightened by an atmosphere that women are expected to succeed in all they do—a “success”

framed by the world's view that *women should be independent and self-reliant*.

When most mothers and grandmothers go through the self-evaluation sheet and identify anything that's either *neutral* or *negative* about how they're raising their child(ren), they hide their shortcomings. Most refuse to share the sheet and discuss it with other women they know because they don't want their self-identified "flaws" brought out in the open—even if it means they might be able to amend those hindrances in their mothering through the help and counsel of others!

So many are reluctant to expose any personal faults or weaknesses in themselves, and even more so in regard to raising their children. A woman who values her self-deception more than she does honest self-appraisal finds that nothing in her mothering or grandmothers changes.

"[Teach] the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed"
(Titus 2:3-5, NKJV)

Living a life that *honors God* is far more than a matter of words. It takes intentional role modeling and training with a purpose: to become the woman our Father designed you to be. God's perspective is *intergenerational*, spanning from grandmother to mother to grandchildren. He has planned that women who have gained wisdom over the course of their years come alongside younger wives and moms, and through *role mod-*

eling and *corrective input*, help them love their husbands and children the way He intends.

Yet in just two generations of time, meaningful contact between older and younger women has become minimal. The unwillingness of older women in particular to provide younger women with the meaningful, corrective feedback they need as counseled in the Titus 2 passage we quoted is one of the greatest curses plaguing marriages and families today. Too often there's little or no interaction and correction from older women that could guide and encourage a younger woman, especially a married one, in the roles to which Father has called her. And if she and her husband are blessed with children, that wisdom is all the more essential.

God has made clear in His Word that parenting is the responsibility of both a father *and* a mother who are supported by other family members, especially grandparents. It takes a family to raise a family! That's why so many children of divorce suffer severe consequences that plague them throughout their lives—especially a sense of expendability and a guardedness that keeps them from letting themselves fully belong to others. **Not only do they find themselves unable to share relational intimacy; few are able to ever fully trust the God Who allowed this family fracture to happen to them. Divorce is a curse on children!**

An increasing number of older women we encounter are themselves mired in self-pity and a sense of inadequacy. Often blaming their husbands or exes or even their fathers for their problems, they feel they're in no position to lovingly confront younger wives and mothers and help them. So, frustrated and dissatisfied, younger wives give in to

the media's deception that they'll be happier elsewhere, and give up on their marriage. There are actually "Christian" books which encourage women to flee their unhappy marriage and find a husband who will allow them to "fulfill God's purpose" for their life! Not only do women currently initiate 85% of divorces in the US; churched couples are divorcing at a higher rate than the unchurched. Truly the word of God is being blasphemed as Titus warned.

"For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; but the woman being deceived fell into transgression"

(1 Timothy 2:14; as perceived from Genesis 3:1-6,13)

God's character is not sexist when He warns women about giving way to deception. He speaks through His writers to make known spiritual truth, even truths some don't want to receive. From Eve's perspective of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the whole encounter with the serpent-disguised devil made sense. The forbidden fruit was attractive, looked tasty, and would make her wise like God. Never mind that Satan twisted the truth and deceived her into disobeying the One Who loved and created her! She was deceived and acted independently, leading her husband astray and shattering the pure relationship they had enjoyed with God.

Eve's not alone in her impulsive vulnerability. There's a tendency toward gullibility that can sway a woman toward activities she never thought she'd give way to, as Paul attests in 2 Timothy 3:6,7. Be assured that neither our Creator nor we are "putting down" women! Rather, we're confirming the warning

that He made sure was included in His Word: **women are prone to deception**. To paraphrase Francis Frangipane,

"Once a woman is deceived, she does not recognize that she is deceived, because she has been deceived!"

The tragedy of deceived thinking which leads to independent action plagues many Christian women because they've failed to help each other develop absolute trust in how truly sovereign God is in everything going on around them. Think about this:

If a woman is married, it's because God saw that her husband needed a suitable helper and life companion, even if neither of them was aware of His divine plan at the time (see Proverbs 16:9). But instead of feeling secure in their loving Father's foreknowledge and pursuing our Lord's ways to become the wife best suited to her husband, many wives give way to fear, worry, and a judgmental spirit concerning their partner (see 1 Peter 3:4-6). And all too often, **a wife's own mother is herself influenced by deception and supports her daughter in the anxious, ungodly attitudes that often lead to discord and breaking the marriage covenant.**

"Always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7)

It may surprise you that women's Bible studies can *hinder* a woman's desire to identify and correct any character flaws she may have. Few older women in these studies take a personal, loving interest in younger wives to hold them accountable to being the best helper and life partner she can be. The older women fail to provide the *corrective feedback* the younger ones need to discover how they may be shaming their husbands.

We noticed over the years that **women's Bible studies which offer no sisterly/motherly corrective input entice younger wives into developing an air of spiritual superiority over their husbands.** They use the facts they learn to bludgeon their husbands rather than sweetly and lovingly sharing God's truth as a means of mutually drawing them closer to Lord Jesus and to one another.

If a woman's heart is puffed up by what she knows, she may feel she's above accountability to make any change in her character (1 Corinthians 8:1). And far too many women are plagued by this snare of deception: **lots of Bible knowledge without corresponding Christ-like character change.**

Perhaps you doubt your tendency as a woman to be deceived away from our Father's perspective. But the world has subtle as well as blatant ways of influencing how females think and act. The two of us often walk in the nearby indoor mall for exercise in inclement weather before the shops open. The words "lewd, vulgar, wanton, and sleazy" pretty accurately describe the image that storefront displays flaunt, especially to impressionable, self-conscious teen girls. The sexually explicit and revealing clothing and the partially clad, flawless mannequins feed on any female's sense of **inferiority** or **inadequacy** if she compares herself to this unrealistic "ideal".

If you haven't frequented shops in the past few years, you may be surprised how often the words "sexy" and "sexier" appear in bold print in the window displays. Sadly, too many Christian mothers not only give way to their daughter's pressure to let them wear these testosterone-inflaming outfits but also wear them themselves! The subliminal mes-

sage to the girls is that it's OK to arouse young men, and really not a big deal if they fornicate—which is the natural consequence of inspiring lust.

Stop and think. Is there really any difference between what young girls are lured by designers to wear and the attire of prostitutes on the street? And where is the sound wisdom and loving **NO!!!** of the mothers and grandmothers of these girls? Have you forsaken your responsibility to instill self-respect and modesty in the young girls in your life so they can know and value that they're *a treasure* to their heavenly Father as well as to their earthly father?

Ask yourself and your close friends, **"Do we dress for comfort or for show?"** Is what you and/or your daughter(s) wear aimed at drawing attention to yourselves? (See 1 Peter 3:3,4.) Have you taught your daughter to take responsibility for her affect on young men when she advertises what God intends to be enjoyed only by her future husband? Have you been deceived that what you or your daughter(s) wear is no business but your own?

Almost EVERY Christian husband we've talked with over the years was content with his wife's body. In fact, the vast majority *didn't* like their wives to dress sexy for show, meaning outside the sanctity of their home. But in most cases his delight in her wasn't enough to keep her from wanting to be seduced by a fashion industry that's dominated by **homosexual designers.** Homosexuals, not husbands and fathers, have more influence on the women in his home than he has. Think how that makes a man feel...

A husband *needs* the wife God has given him to be his suitable life partner, a woman who loves her Lord and is will-

ing to evaluate her God-given role and amend it as needed. Your husband is like Adam: God knew he needed a wife; otherwise he could have stayed single!

Perhaps God has already been showing you how individually and collectively women are prone to deception, especially self-deception. Realize as well that you need the insights of your husband, father, uncle, elder or whoever will give you the male perspective in order to consider the whole picture. Male and female He made them!

“I hate divorce,’ says the LORD God”
(Malachi 2:16)

Let’s review a bit because we know that what we’re writing is certainly countercultural. We noted that 85% of divorces today are initiated by women. We’ve also observed from both God’s Word and innumerable conversations that women are likelier than men to give way to deception, and are often reluctant to self-evaluate using God’s Word as their standard. It’s far easier for a wife to judge her husband’s failures than to look at herself to see how she’s falling short as God’s goal that she be her husband’s loving helper and fitting, lifelong companion.

We’re obviously aware of very real abuse suffered by wives and kids at the hands of brutish and uncaring husbands and fathers. And sadly, we also know of wives who intentionally pushed the buttons of their former husbands through attitudes and actions in retaliation for the men’s hurtful words. Be assured that we mean it when we say that *nothing* justifies bullying and violence. But when wives blithely proclaim to others, “I was abused!”, no one probes to find out how *they* may have failed their husbands. Deceiving themselves that they’re “innocent” victims, most never ask themselves,

“What was my part in falling short of what my Lord and my husband needed in this marriage?”

The inability to face her own contribution to a broken marriage covenant is deepened when a woman is given primary custody of any child(ren). Because of this responsibility, she’s generally regarded as a sacrificial good person. And so many divorced and unwed mothers in this nation are responsible for raising their children alone that the media often portrays them in the role of **heroine**—often in a far more favorable light than the woman who is still married! It’s not news that both *marriage* as a permanent covenant union and *motherhood* as an honorable and ongoing role of responsible upbringing have suffered insult for decades by the media and society at large.

To their sorrow, many Christian women could have seen their Father transform their marriage as they prayerfully received counsel from godly women and put it into practice by His loving and powerful Spirit. Instead, they gave way to the world’s deceit and are now raising their children *alone or part-time*. Those whom our Lord *called out* of the world have instead incorporated its ways as their own and are paying a heavy price.

Please consider this. We know there are self-sacrificing single mothers who are raising responsible children. Some are creatively seeking out men of integrity to come alongside their sons and daughters to offer them a male perspective. As we’ve written previously, there’s a direct correlation between the rise of homosexuality and lesbianism and the proliferation of young children being raised solely by women without a father-figure in their lives. Without a wholesome father-figure, young children have a 75% higher prob-

ability of becoming homosexuals. Godly men of honor are desperately needed!

Divorce has become so painfully common that an entire generation of young people is deciding marriage is a negative choice—something which recent statistics confirm in the alarming number of young people who have shunned a marriage commitment and chosen “living together” instead. Can you see the devilish smirk from the deception of Eve to the independent women of today?

Certain congregations here in Colorado Springs seem to cater to divorced women, offering a distorted message (disguised as grace) of acceptability from a “woman-imagined god” who has no commands or boundaries and ignores their bitterness, unforgiveness and slander against their ex.

No one in these congregations ever questions the divorcee’s part in dissolving their marriage. **No one** probes to find out how she may have failed her husband by not being the helper and life companion our Lord wanted her to be. **No one** asks her about her undemolished strongholds, or exposes any toxic memories that were part of the baggage she brought into the marriage. All remains hidden; therefore she changes nothing, and her attitudes infect other women.

We need to add another insight based on personal experience and on testimonies of others. We've found it necessary to advise leaders in the home fellowship/house church movement to be wary if several divorced women join their extended spiritual family. Their tendency toward self-deception and refusal to self-evaluate in order to change can make these ladies a destructive force in intergender groups.

Divorced women and widows are not synonymous! Widows became that way

without choice. Many divorced women chose their path. Independence and defiance can often mar the character of unrepentant divorced women when they're given a vocal platform in small group gatherings.

If you have a husband, please prayerfully evaluate your role in his life. In fact, discuss this question with some other wives who love and serve Jesus: *"Are we the best life companions our husbands can have in the eyes of our Lord? If not, what do we need to change? And how can we help one another?"* We recommend you use the self-evaluation sheet we provided in Teaching Email 61. If you have children still at home, ask yourselves: *"Are we doing the best by our Lord's standards to raise a godly generation? If not, what do we need to change? And how can we help one another?"*

A note of warning if you're a cowardly husband:

Too many husbands cringe when for the good of their home they need to correct something in their wife's behavior or attitude or decisions. If you love your wife and children as our Lord calls for, that love must ALWAYS overrule your fear. Severe consequences result when you refuse to provide appropriate correction; *you will be shamed like rottenness to your bones.*

In Christ, God has given you the grace and the power to do as He commands: *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the called-out and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word"* (Ephesians 5:25,26). Your responsibility as a loving husband walking the path of his Lord is twofold: to not only know the will of God for how your family should live (His *rhema*), but also to make sure all of you put His will into practice.

God has called you to *lead* your family! If you make something else in your life a higher priority than what Father is commanding in the above passage, you may one day find yourself alone without your wife and child(ren).

**"Has not [the LORD] made them one?
In flesh and spirit they are His.
And why one?**

**"Because He was seeking godly offspring"
(Malachi 2:15; also Proverbs 22:6)**

The following quote comes from a David Wilkerson letter, *Violence!*, which we recommended a while back.

**"[Secular] teachers are now
one of the most violent,
destructive forces in the world!
They rob children of their faith in
God—of the Creation story, of the
gospel, of morals, of absolutes.
This is violence in the sight of God!"**

We wanted to repeat Wilkerson's observation because WE TOTALLY AGREE WITH IT! You may wonder how in your lifetime this society has devolved into such a state of chaos.

You'll find that today's compulsory public education is *obsessed with meeting the needs of divorced and unwed mothers.*

The goal of public education is to satisfy the academic requirements demanded by the government for every child. And the overwhelmingly greatest need lays among families with a single parent, normally a divorced or unwed woman.

"NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND!" Have you thought about how this seemingly noble phrase affects the academic and moral development of children in the public education sector? Without stating it, the kids most likely to be "left behind"

are those whose families are relationally distressed or broken or economically disadvantaged. Mandatory testing and teacher evaluations (and raises) which are dependent on scores have left many public educators focused on transmitting facts that will be tested on national exams. Teachers are forced to "teach to the test"; there's little time for them to train a child to think through situations, or to impart character.

Often in the inner city especially, the classroom is in chaos. Students who may want to learn are mocked by those with less lofty interests. Character development, once a staple in the classroom (and in the home!), has fallen by the wayside. Teachers have to focus on the neediest children, those in the least stable home environments—generally those with single moms. We grieve for the situation these kids and their mothers are in; in biblical times children without fathers would be considered "orphans". However, in faith communities back then, ministering *as family* to "the least of these" would also be more readily practiced than is seen today.

Another sad reality exists as well: girls raised in homes with either no father or with an uninvolved or irresponsible dad often give way early in life to sexual encounters that result in pregnancies—babies born into heartbreaking situations which without Godly intervention will only be repeated generation to generation.

An education system which seems to be charitable on behalf of single mothers and their children is perpetuating an immoral lifestyle which will undermine current as well as future generations. Until alternatives which are dependent on God and His Word can be offered, the cycle will continue.

One of the most significant battlefields of the KINGDOM of God versus the domain of Satan has been the compulsory public education of this nation's children. Satan's total domination of public education in recent decades has been undeniable in producing a humanity-exalting, godless society that denies the one true God of the Bible.

Under the guise of "tolerance", pluralism and relativism reign; only Christianity with its reliance on Jesus as the sole Way, Truth and Life is opposed by the system. Our research into public education revealed it provides the insidious means for the government to legally "kidnap" the minds of children to subvert loyalty to their parents, especially their fathers. Teachers and peer groups exert more influence in most children's lives than do their parent(s).

When you talk with parents about educating their children, you usually find that **the type of education a child receives is predominantly determined by the mother**. Whether a child is educated at home, put in a Christian school, or left to spiritually die in a public education venue is often based on **how much the mother is willing to be inconvenienced by her child(ren)**.

Even in families in which finances are not the driving issue, mothers often find ways to avoid the inconvenience of pursuing God's will to daily raise up their children to love, honor and trust Him. And this is made even more difficult for mothers who are divorced or unwed.

Consider Wilkerson's words again:

"[Secular] teachers are now one of the most violent, destructive force in the world! They rob children of their faith in God—of the Creation story, of the gospel,

of morals, of absolutes. This is violence in the sight of God!"

An education system that denies the very existence of God; that refutes creation as a fantasy; that holds a child's mind captive for six hours a day over the course of 13 to 17 or more years sends an undeniable message that the One true God is a *story*—an irrelevant myth who doesn't matter in daily life. And as a parent, you need to realize that you can't undo the *anti-God indoctrination* that's accomplished by public education as it infects your child with its ungodly values. By your very choice to place them in that godless system, you've shown your child(ren) by your actions that you believe in what they're being taught.

If you're a Christian father or mother with children in the public education system, you need to realize that the most common traits they learn are **duplicity** and **manipulation**. They become chameleons, reflecting at home the behavior you expect from them but then changing at school to behave as their peers expect. Under those conditions how do you think they can live with Jesus Christ as the center of their lives? You send them to spend too many hours in the classroom being shown how unimportant He is. Tragically, 77% of churching young people walk away from any faith in Jesus after they leave home. Think about this while there's still time!

God designed that children be raised in a home in the loving direction and training of both a father and a mother. In fact, until the late 1800s, **"education" was defined as the relationship of a mother with her children**. Is it any wonder the Bible repeats, *"Do not forsake your mother's teaching"* (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; see also 1 Timothy 2:15)? And isn't a father

required when God commands through His servant Paul, "*Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4)? Fathers and mothers are sorely needed *together* to raise a Godly generation.

Since we're directing much of this email to wives and mothers, we want to repeat this:

Please, use the self-evaluation sheets we gave you in Teaching E-mail 61 and discuss them with those who care about you doing our Father's will. Now is the time to be honest with yourself. Now is the time to cooperate with those close to you so that excellence in loving and serving Jesus as Lord of your life is what you're about. May your life (whether single, divorced, married or widowed), your marriage and your children reflect the One in Whose steps you're walking!

Mike & Sue

For more on this essential topic, please explore these resources, all free at our website:

- Discussing How to Restore the Early Church, Lesson 33. ***Why We Need Fathers***
- May 2001 Newsletter, ***Jesus versus the Queen of Heaven***
- Jesus In Your Home video segments on ***The Home***.
- Hebraic Article, From "***Changing Woman***" to ***Christ-like Woman***
- Hebraic Article, ***Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations***

We also recommend to you a biblically sound, insightful book on God's view of marriage as a physical representation of the spiritual union we have in Christ, *This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence* by John Piper. The wondrous position of any authentic follower of Jesus is among the called-out who are His eternal bride. Piper uses this reality to encourage and reinforce the earthly covenant relationship of those who are married, and the permanent covenant union of all His followers, whether single, widowed, divorced or married. You may be able to find this book at your library as we did.