

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 37

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth:

• *Authority In The Home*

3. "Delegated Responsibility"
4. No Excuses, No Blame
5. God's Requirement For Peace
6. Authority Has Jurisdictional Limits



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THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth: *Authority In The Home*

3. “Delegated Responsibility”

“And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs; and He was giving them authority over the unclean spirits” (Mark 6:7, NAS).

We need to begin this lesson by making an important biblical distinction:

- **Authority and leadership are not synonymous.**
- **Authority in the home as well as the faith community is limited to men.**
- **Yet, both men and women can be leaders.**

Among God’s people, all men who have authority should be able to lead. However, not all leaders have authority. Biblically, both men and women are capable of leading. Yet authority is

reserved for men within their *jurisdictional boundaries*—the specific arena in which their authority is exercised.

For example, a football coach has full authority over his team. He decides who to include or who to remove from the roster. He also commends and corrects the players, and rewards their efforts by giving them more playing time.

Yet his authority over his players extends only for the season, and is limited to those areas of their lives which affect their playing ability. These are his “jurisdictional boundaries”.

The coach appoints those with good leadership skills to be team captains and assigns them certain responsibilities within his broad realm of authority. This assignment is called “delegated responsibility”.

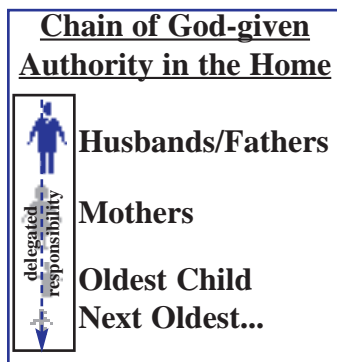
Delegated responsibility refers to the *limited leadership* a person in authority entrusts to an assistant, whether on a team or in the workplace or even in the home. The level of responsibility that’s delegated is commensurate with the task the helper needs to accomplish in cooperation with others.

The conditions and limits of delegated responsibility are normally stipulated in advance so the person doesn’t overstep his or her bounds. And, his or her leadership role is made known to the others involved so they’ll recognize that leadership role

and respond as they would to the coach or the boss or the head of household.

Within his sphere of delegated leadership, the football captain may lead the team, yet he has *no authority* over the players. He may commend good play and correct bad, but he can't remove anyone.

Let's look at an example from the workplace. The individual to whom the boss delegates leadership to fulfill a specific assignment has no authority to fire a fellow worker or issue raises. The delegated leader reports directly to the boss, and the fellow employees are aware of that. They know that their level of cooperation and performance will be reported, so if they're wise, they'll recognize the surrogate power of the delegated leader and respond as they would if their boss were leading them.



The home front is another arena in which delegation of responsibility by the person in authority comes into play. A father has authority in his family

(see Ephesians 5:23), but not in a form that demeans his wife since the comparison of a husband's headship is made with the relational headship of Jesus and His Father: the "*head of the Messiah is God.*"

A wife is given a significant degree of delegated responsibility in her role of raising her children. But the final authority within the home rests with the father, who must render account to God to "*bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4).

Responsibility for the children can

also be delegated to someone outside the family. Say a couple wants to go out for an evening, and they hire a teenager to stay with their children.

As the parents brief the sitter, they'll delegate certain responsibilities so that the sitter can effectively take care of the children. The sitter may be told the parameters for correcting behavior, for what activities with the children are acceptable, and even what discipline is appropriate. But authority over the children always rests with the parents, and ultimately the father.

Wise parents will make sure their kids are present when this delegated responsibility is orally communicated to the sitter so they'll be more inclined to cooperate. If they know their behavior might be reported to their parents, then the leadership of the sitter carries greater weight!

It's also helpful for peace within the home if the firstborn child is raised with a sense of being trained as a leader among his or her siblings to both model obedience as well as to guide the younger ones along the right path.

In the Older Testament in particular, the role of the firstborn carried a special responsibility level, since that male would be first in line to lead the extended family when the father died.

For example, when the patriarch Jacob lay dying, he called his sons together to bequeath a blessing to each. The eldest was addressed first: "*Reuben, you are my first-born; My might and the beginning of my strength, Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power*" (Genesis 49:3). Yet because of his grievous sin, the eldest was disqualified from the honor that would have been due him—a point well-taken for today's firstborn. With privilege comes responsibility!

In homes in which the chain of authority is respected *and* delegated responsibility is made clear, peace abides. Children are poised to learn humility, servanthood and submission. In contrast, when there is no clear understanding of the chain of God-given authority, and responsibility is not openly delegated and upheld, needless apprehension ensues with hurt feelings and bickering.

Do you understand the importance of delegation of responsibility? Are the parameters and enactment of delegation clear in your own household? Yes or no? If no, what do you need to clarify?

When you are delegated responsibility whether at home, at work or in other contexts, do you adequately and loyally represent your authority person? Do you ever find yourself undermining that person in order to make yourself look good? Give an example.

4. No Excuses, No Blame

“The man said, ‘The woman You put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.’ Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate’”
 (Genesis 3:12,13).

The blame game initiated by Adam and Eve has detrimentally impacted mankind far more deeply than most are aware of. On the surface the pattern seems simple: The man blames his wife in order to avoid the sure consequences, and she follows his lead and blames the serpent.



But consider what our first parents *didn't* do. They ***didn't take responsibility*** for their actions, proving that their relationship with their loving yet holy Creator had been undermined.

Rather than accepting the guilt of their wrongdoing and repenting before God, they excused their disobedience through blame. By blaming his wife instead of humbly taking responsibility for choosing to follow her lead rather than God's command, Adam as well as Eve were ejected from His presence.

Through Adam's irresponsible refusal to admit guilt, death came into being for all mankind. And from that day onward men have been plagued with a sinful propensity to excuse themselves and blame others.

As we wrote earlier, men who are willing to ***stand in the gap*** accept responsibility and refrain from giving excuses and blaming others. To be this type of man requires the ongoing sanctification of the Holy Spirit as you yield willingly to His work in you.

When a man walks in the authority God has given him, he's saying in his heart, ***“The buck stops with me.”*** It is *our Father* Who places men in authority roles in their homes and faith communities, and He refuses to accept excuses when they fail in their responsibilities.

Nor will He allow those in authority to blame the people in their care when they themselves have failed. If you're serving our Lord in a position of authority, it's critical that you SHUT YOUR MOUTH. Don't ever blame others OR give excuses when you fall short. As you'll see, dire consequences await those who walk unrighteously in their authority.

Keep in mind if you ARE in authority:

God will NOT ACCEPT EXCUSES from those in positions of authority who fail to fulfill their responsibilities.

Nor will He allow those who serve in authority to BLAME those in their care when they themselves have failed.

[Mike]: I initially learned the biblical understanding of authority during my 10 years of military service. I marveled how so many leadership principles seem to have come right out of Scripture.

This was engrained in us in Officer Candidate School: When a senior officer confronts you about a mistake you've made, the only acceptable response is, "No excuse, sir!" After several years in the Navy, I began to read the Bible for the first time. One of the things that I noticed immediately was that God didn't accept excuses either—from anyone.

Moses, as you'll recall, tried to use his speech impediment as an excuse to stay out of Egypt. When he pushed his point we're told, "*the Lord's anger burned against Moses*" (Exodus 4:14). Not a good situation!

When the Lord undertook to recruit Gideon to fight the Midianites, the fearful man offered an excuse: "*My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family*" (Judges 6:15). God wouldn't accept his excuses; so, armed with His

Lord's assurance, Gideon led his troops to victory.

If you have any doubts that God deals harshly with those who use blame, just consider King Saul: He was confronted by the prophet Samuel for failing to completely destroy the Amalekites as he'd been commanded by God. Saul, however, blamed his fear of the people for his disobedience. And, for blaming others rather than humbly asking forgiveness, the king lost his kingdom (1 Samuel 13).

When confronted by the prophet Nathan, on the other hand, King David **repented** for his adultery with Bathsheba and for murdering her husband (2 Samuel 12). Even a repentant adulterer and murderer who takes responsibility for his actions can be forgiven and retain his authority.

By taking full responsibility through repentance and by **not** giving any excuses, David **kept** his kingdom and was honored with an everlasting dynasty.

Men, heed this warning:

If you serve in authority and use excuses and blame to hide your irresponsibility, you're forfeiting your role of authority. The buck must stop with you!

Too many parents blame society, the school system, the media or whatever for failures in their children. But know this: When parents habitually blame their children or anyone else for the chaos and strife in their home, they're excusing *themselves* for not having fulfilled ALL their parental responsibilities.

If you don't sufficiently serve in your God-given authority, you're abdicating your parental position in the eyes of your family. Cults are filled with the children of Christian parents who for-

feited their authority through irresponsibility to God's commands, then hid behind excuses and blame.

Where does the buck stop in your home? With the husband/father or the wife? If it's with the wife, why is this so? (If you have children and have doubts where the buck stops, ask them. They know.)

Are you in the habit of blaming others or giving excuses for your shortcomings? Ask those close to you for feedback.

5. God's Requirement For Peace

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house"
(Luke 10:5-7).

**Where authority is properly exercised, there is peace.
Where peace exists, love can grow.**

When our Lord Jesus sent his disciples out to the various towns to prepare the way for His arrival, He forbade them to stay in a home that didn't have peace. Think about that. Why would our Lord

place such a constraint on His disciples? For the answer, we need to examine the Hebrew word for peace, "shalom" [shah-LOHM].

In the Hebrew language, even the letters that comprise a word have special significance. The letters in **shalom** mean **"authority that keeps chaos in check."** The absence of chaos is peace. And, the proper use of authority is our Father's means for maintaining peace among His children.

So when Jesus told His apostles to not even stay in the home of a man who doesn't know how to keep peace there, He was barring them from a home in which godly authority wasn't being exercised. The lack of peace was the evidence.

Shalom refers to more than the absence of disharmony. It encompasses the full range of well-being, safety, comfort and contentment! In essence, if a man can't bring about well-being in the place that's supposed to be a sanctuary, he's exercising rebellion against God's command to be head of his home.

Rebellion is contagious, whether within a family, a workplace or society. The saying, "One bad apple spoils the entire barrel", is scripturally correct. Only when people love God and serve Him in holy fear will they refuse to obey their sin nature's inclination to rebel.

God proffered a seemingly harsh command to the Israelites because they needed to recognize the seriousness of rebellion if it isn't confronted and checked.

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him [a habitual situation, not a first-time offender], his

father and mother shall take hold of him and **bring him to the elders** [those endowed with authority on behalf of many] at the gate of his town.

They shall say to the elders, “This son of ours is **stubborn and rebellious**. He will not obey us. He is a **profligate and a drunkard** [not a resistant child; rather, a young adult who habitually walks in public misconduct].”

Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death [corporate responsibility to confront the sin and dispatch the unrepentant sinner]. **You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid** (Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

There is actually no record that this severe command ever was enacted. Certainly it was meant to be horrific enough to act as an effective deterrent! Our Hebraic forefathers who led the early faith communities understood the importance of **relational influence**. They had no doubts about the negative effect one man could have on many—an underlying reason for the above Deuteronomy passage.

A man who failed to exercise authority as a servant-leader in his home was not only rebellious in God’s sight, but also a coward. Again, the effects of the cowardly on others are contagious, and bring about doubt and unrest.

God had promised the Israelites that in the face of the many strong armies they’d face, He Himself would be with them. His representative to the army, a priest, would preclude the influence of fear before battle with these words:

Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be

fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. Then the officers shall add, “Is any man afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his brothers will not become disheartened too (Deuteronomy 20:2,3,8).

Don’t give way to fear or distrust of God’s faithfulness. Your family will pick up on your doubt and copy you. If you’re a man of loving courage who exercises godly authority, then peace will be the hallmark of your home.

There *will* be times when your home’s walls of peace are breached. But don’t cast blame or give excuses. Take responsibility and repent if you’re the one who allowed disharmony to flourish. If a family member needs to repent, pray through that with them so that peace can be restored to your whole household.

Where men are serving their family in godly authority, peace is being maintained, and chaos is eliminated. Peace is the necessary atmosphere for relational love to blossom. That’s a fact!

The biblical understanding of peace, or *shalom*, implies wellness and harmony both in yourself and with those around you. Scientific studies confirm the Bible’s stance of the connection between peace and good health: “**A heart at peace gives life to the body**” (Proverbs 14:30).

The kind of peace our Lord wants you to experience is His gift to those who wholeheartedly trust Him and keep His commands: “**You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You**” (Isaiah 26:3).

Peace in your home encompasses the security of wholeness and well-being of each person living there. Your immovable confidence in His faithfulness is the

foundation for the loving warmth you need to nurture yourself and your family in the way of our Lord.

If you're a husband, what do you think about the truth that a follower of Jesus can't stay at the home of a man who doesn't know how to maintain peace in it?

How would you evaluate the overall level of peace in your home?

Ask your family for their input. And, ask them for suggestions for how to improve the peace in your home. List what they share.

Sue especially for women:

A wife as an *ezer* suited for him helps her husband fulfill ALL of his responsibilities before God. A key responsibility is an atmosphere of peace in the home. Our Father has called us women to maintain *shalom* in our homes: not just peace as in absence of bickering, but also harmony, health, and an environment that reflects His presence.

As soon as your children are able, have them participate in family chores geared to their level. There's no shortage of opportunity in American society for the individualistic "ME" to be reinforced. So, it's absolutely essential that you intervene with an awareness of per-

sonal responsibility for each family member to contribute to the well-being of the family as a whole. That includes patience-growing activities involving everyone (such as reading together, board games, walks), as well as insisting on respect for the dignity of each person.

You are the heart of your home, the one responsible to offer hospitality and warmth to everyone our Father brings your way, especially those who already live with you. Anything that you do or allow to happen to disrupt this altar of service needs to be addressed immediately!

Remind each person in your household that creating and maintaining an environment of peace is non-optional!

If you're a wife: Ask yourself if you might inadvertently be robbing your home from being a sanctuary of peace. Do you get upset if your husband doesn't agree with you in all matters in your household? Yes or no? Ask your family for feedback.

Are you running your household ragged by giving in to your kids' demands for too many activities or shopping expeditions? Describe your daily and weekly priorities with your family.

Shouldn't you be teaching your children to *serve others* with a willing heart rather than giving in to the world's way of catering to them out of guilt? What ideas come to mind to bring about this character change in them as well as you?

Confront Bearers of Ill Reports

When couples marry, they often fail to establish a solid chain of command which delegates responsibility effectively. In particular, too often the *wife's mother* exerts too great an influence on her daughter, diminishing the husband's role as servant-leader of his wife. (In some segments of Navajo society this influence is so blatant that a woman's husband has to leave the room when his mother-in-law is present.)

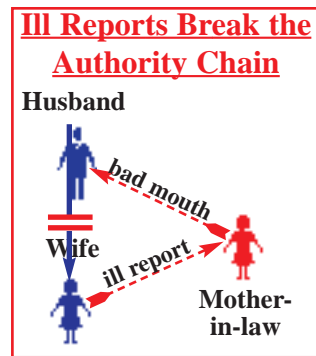
We cite mothers-in-law because of the epidemic of destructive impact they are having in disrupting the peace of their daughter's home. When a daughter mouths off to her mother in dissatisfaction about her husband, the older woman will generally take her side without even hearing the husband's perspective! This is slander, and puts BOTH women in a position of sinning.

Of course, slander from disgruntled wives isn't thrust just to their mothers. Ill reports from *anyone* within a home will also rob the peace and be a source of slander and gossip.

If you desire *shalom*—the fullness of harmony and peace—in your home, sisters, DO NOT GIVE negative reports against your husband to either your mother or your mother-in-law, NOR LISTEN TO THEM. And men, exercise godly leadership by confronting in firm love both your wife and your mother-in-law to either speak encouragement or to cease such conversations until they can!

[See our [July, 2000 newsletter, Lashon hara — Bad Mouthing.](#)]

We have a dear friend who dreaded her mother's annual week-long visit because it always ended in frustration and agitation. Over the years her mother had made it known



to the entire family that she didn't approve of her son-in-law. Her visits were marked by barbed comments and snide asides. The young man felt like a prisoner in his own household whenever his mother-in-law was there.

But this visit was different. After she and her husband learned and applied the Hebraic foundations concerning authority, our friend purposed that she would honor her husband and confront any dishonor brought by her mother. The first two days of the visit passed without incident, but agitation began to brew as in the past in the form of derogatory comments.

Our friend took her mother to lunch and firmly but lovingly made clear that such behavior and attitudes were dishonoring to both her and to her husband. What developed was two hours of honest and open conversation as the mother finally recognized in her daughter a loyalty and maturity she'd never chosen to admit before.

[For more on how to effectively confront someone, see our book [Growing Relationships Through Confrontation.](#)]

Ladies, don't succumb to intergenerational bondage. If you're younger, remember that when you married, you LEFT your mother and father to become part of a new household led by your hus-

band. You've become part of a God-given chain of authority. Submit with trust in our Lord's way and stay protected by it.

DO NOT fall into the demonic Queen of Heaven's trap of grumbling to your mother about every little misdeed of your husband (or of your children either). Grant them the loving dignity of knowing that your home and the events that occur in it are not the subject of chatter or complaint.

[For further explanation of this topic, see our newsletters, [2001-05](#) & [2001-06](#), [The Queen of Heaven.](#)]

Satan may especially influence a woman who has the **gift of mercy** to entertain slander and gossip, particularly over the phone. He counts on her compassion to listen to stories of woe that often contain bitter resentment defaming a third party. As a result, one-sided, derogatory slander about another person is shared. This creates tension that affects the peace of the mercy person's life and relationships in her own home.

Repentance for receiving slander is a must if you're going to truly represent God in Spirit-led mercy. And, if you're heeding bad reports about others no matter what the source, you need to turn from that out of love for your husband and family. When you choose to disregard God's commands, you're robbing your home of peace through your sin.

Don't be a woman who tolerates or encourages her daughter or daughter-in-law to complain or grumble. Instead, be a Titus, chapter 2 woman by living out what you know is biblical and godly. Teach and instruct her from your life experiences and from lessons learned from others how to truly love her husband and children in ways that will produce a fruitful life.

Ask yourself:

Do my thoughts and words and actions show *Jesus shining through me*?

Do you bad-mouth others, or do you listen to bad reports about others? Yes or no? If yes, describe how this happens.

If you have the gift of mercy, do you find yourself trapped into receiving ill reports about others? Yes or no? If yes, how does this happen?

How can you stop being part of bad-mouthing? How can you be a reconciler of relationships rather than a woman who tears them down through gossip and slander?

6. Authority Has Jurisdictional Limits

"Someone in the crowd said to Him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed Me a judge or an arbiter between you?'"

(Luke 12:13,14).

In this passage the Lord Jesus refused to cross a **jurisdictional limit**. To our Hebraic forefathers, to cross a jurisdictional line made you a **meddler**.

Poking your nose where it doesn't belong has worse consequences than you

may think: *“Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who **meddles** in a quarrel **not his own**”* (Proverbs 26:17). Peter also warns, *“If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or **even as a meddler**”* (1 Peter 4:15).

Many Christians readily meddle in affairs God has forbidden them in His Word. This is a result of failing to understand the biblical nature of *jurisdiction*.

The proper function of authority embodies a jurisdictional limit or boundary. Within his jurisdiction the person in authority has specific responsibilities and a defined framework in which to operate.

For instance, the authority of a parent is limited to his or her household, not to others in the neighborhood. A policeman in Colorado can't arrest someone in New Mexico. The President of the United States has no authority in France. This seems obvious, doesn't it?

Respecting jurisdictional boundaries, early Church elders pastored the men, who then “pastored” their own families. The Bible states that a man has jurisdiction over his family as servant-leader in the pattern of Jesus: *“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the **husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior**”* (Ephesians 5:22,23). Again, *“Wives, submit to your husbands, **as is fitting in the Lord**”* (Colossians 3:18).

Yet in the current Nicolaitan religious system, the biblical lines of jurisdiction and authority have become blurred. Many religious programs undermine a husband/father's jurisdiction within his own household.

Often, clergy see themselves as “pastoring” the entire family rather than equipping the head of household to be more effective. The pastor, youth group

leader or Sunday School teacher can displace the father's spiritual influence in his family. If others jump in too readily to fill the need, why should a father bother? How much more biblical if an older man *came alongside* these fathers to guide them in discipling their families!

Mike asked a number of church leaders if they looked for programs to compensate for fathers who were negligent in the spiritual training and oversight of their families. The majority admitted that was exactly the kind of programs they implemented.

Instead of coming alongside the man to shepherd and equip him to be a biblical husband and father, the leadership substituted activities that interfered with his jurisdictional responsibilities. Sunday school classes and Bible studies often lack respect for God's jurisdictional boundaries.

Not only do many men feel inferior when they compare themselves to the “spirituality” of the clergy or youth group leader, they also feel uncomfortable when their jurisdiction boundary is crossed. They can sense someone is infringing on their jurisdiction with their wives and children, but many aren't sure why they feel uncomfortable about it.

Many an embarrassed man shrinks into his seat as his wife gets into subjects that should be dealt with at home first. Paul might have encountered this problem in Corinth, prompting him to admonish,

*If there is something [wives] want to know, let them ask their **own husbands at home**; for it is shameful for a woman to speak out in a congregational meeting* (1 Corinthians 14:35).

Even when a man leaves the Nicolaitan system, the habit of spiritual irresponsibility may stay with him if he isn't aware the problem exists. This is why we discussed the impact that Nicolaitanism may have had on you.

If you've succumbed to irresponsibility and let your jurisdictional boundaries be crossed, you need to repent and cry out for our Father to help you do all He requires of you.

If you know other men who are fulfilling their responsibilities, ask them for help.

Let's say at this point that biblical jurisdiction is an extremely important issue for God's elder/shepherds to consider. How great is the need for intergenerational relationships among men so they can discuss the jurisdictional boundaries within their families and the accompanying responsibilities.

Wives and children whose husbands and fathers are failing their responsibility do have a "court of appeal". The elders in the extended spiritual family of the home fellowship are responsible to protect and counsel those in distress.

When a man fails to serve in the authority God requires within his jurisdictional boundary, the family can appeal to the spiritual authorities. A wife can also appeal to her father or father-in-law.

Jurisdictional Responsibility Means Making Wise Decisions

Our Lord planned that wives and husbands discuss in their home the issues that involve **making wise decisions** that will affect the family. Coming up with sound input that she's gleaned through prayer and research is a vital element of a wife's role as a beneficial helper and com-

panion to her husband. Within his jurisdictional boundaries a man is expected to consider all available counsel, especially his wife's, and ultimately develop wise decisions.

A truly wise person seeks the wisdom from others who have experience in a particular situation: "*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed*" (Proverbs 15:22; see also Proverbs 11:14, 24:6). As it pertains to family matters a wise husband will seek the counsel of his wife and sometimes everyone else his decision might affect.

This is a cardinal rule of a wise leader:

Before making a decision, solicit the input of everyone your decision will affect. This practice contributes both to a wise solution and to the morale of those involved.

You aren't looking for everyone to *vote* on the matter. Rather, you are seeking wise input.

Making wise decisions and acting upon them is often a several-step process that requires discussion and confirmation. Usually situations come up that need (1) **to be considered**. If the consideration ideas are received favorably, someone then (2) **makes a proposal** for a potential course of action. Then (3) **planning** occurs, discussing and weighing the details of how and when the action or response will be carried out. This leads to a (4) **decision to execute**. Finally, (5) **execution** of the event or action takes place.

Quite often this five-fold process happens so naturally that you don't think of it as a sequence.

Keep in mind the differences we discussed earlier between the male and female brain and the speed with which

conclusions are reached by women. Men, with a smaller corpus callosum connecting the two hemispheres, need to go through all four steps prior to execution.

A wise wife remembers this difference in decision-making patterns and makes sure her husband has the opportunity to: consider—propose solutions—plan how to make the outcome happen—decide that the action will indeed happen—before arriving at a conclusion of, “Let’s do it!”

A man who is forced into making decisions on the spot generally feels very uncomfortable. And, if he finds himself in that predicament too frequently, he senses control and manipulation.

Look at the diagram below. In every process of making wise decisions, you need to consider the *why*, *who*, *what*, *where* and *when*. In our diagram, let’s say that seven specific variables must be considered before you make a certain decision. The first three variables are **why** factors.

If you don’t have a clear reason **why** you’re going to do something, discord occurs. That was a painful lesson of the Vietnam War and even the current Iraqi conflict. **Why** we were in Vietnam and **why** we are in Iraq are ridden with unclear motivations, causing profuse division and resentment in this country.

Discord that results from inadequate consideration of **why** an action should take place occurs in families and faith communities as well. So, solving the “why” is a crucial first step for men

when they need to make wise decisions.

Studies have confirmed that because of the difference in wiring, *women spend little or no time over the “why” of a decision*. They see a desired outcome and jump in to make it happen.

Men usually take the time to consider “why” because “why” has to do with the motive of heart. Motive stirs foundational thought before progressing beyond *considering* an idea. So any time a wise decision is sought, men need time to solve the “why”. The wise know why!

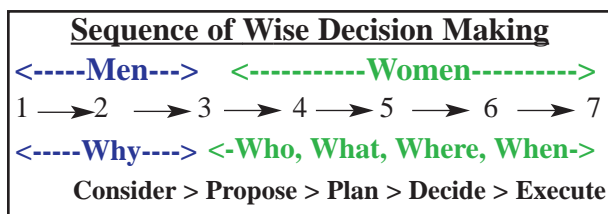
This is especially true in their responsibility to God in the exercise of their authority as servant-leaders. If the “why” is of God and aligns with His Word, His grace and blessing are in the decision. All the rest of the elements for the idea to become action are then easier to arrive at.

A warning here:

To the degree that men are silent or uninvolved when a decision needs to be made, women will begin with **Step 3** on the diagram—the “Who, What, Where, When” and progress rapidly and efficiently to complete the task. This can lead, however, to a “perfectly placed ladder against the wrong house.” It’s crucial that a man not remain passive when important decisions need to be made in his home.

Just remember: When you have God’s “why”, His blessing goes with it. If the “why” is missing, you’ll find fear, anxiety, discord, manipulation and control.

Wise decisions not only matter in the here and now of our daily lives. We must also take into account the far greater *eternal* issue of our heart motivation for why we did every action here on earth. This is the foremost consideration of our Lord when He judges us.



*So don't pronounce judgment prematurely, before the Lord comes; for He will **bring to light** what is now hidden in darkness; He will **expose the motives of people's hearts**; and then each will receive from God whatever praise he deserves (1 Corinthians 4:5).*

As we've written in many of our newsletters, the "why" is a crucial part of the Hebraic Restoration. It reveals the *motives* of your actions. Motive is more crucial in God's sight than who, what, where or when.

In our own marriage, when we've followed the above sequence we've been able to fulfill God's will with minimal stress. At every marriage conference we've attended, the number one need of wives has been for "wise direction" from their husbands as servant-leader of the family—a critical motivation for prayer!

[Mike]: I appreciate when Sue asks for my input before she acts on major ideas she's considering. Once the initial steps of *why* she wants to do something are covered, everything else seems to fit into place seamlessly.

I thank our Lord for the wisdom He has developed in her over the years, because the alternative to that wisdom is spelled out clearly: "*The **wise woman** builds her house, but with her own hands the **foolish one** tears hers down*" (Proverbs 14:1).

The foolish woman treats step 3 as if it were step 1. If she is in your family, you need to confront her to weigh the WHY first.

How clear are you on jurisdictional boundaries? As a husband/father, do you know your family responsibilities as God requires? Are you fully carrying them out?

Describe the process of making wise decisions in your household. What areas of decision making commonly create tension?

From Sue especially for women:

Alignment & Role Responsibility

The self-destructive path of **control** and **independence** has lured so many women away from the loving order our Lord designed for marriage.

Lest you men or single/divorced women think this topic doesn't apply, please reconsider. You're not meant to live in emotional or spiritual isolation in the Body of Jesus. If you're indwelt by His Spirit, then, as Paul reminds the believers in Corinth and us as well, you are *interconnected* with every other follower of Jesus on this planet. Whatever issue impacts one part of the Body needs to be brought into the open for every other part's consideration, especially if it involves a warning or exhortation.

Have you ever driven your car when the tires are severely out of alignment? There's such a tugging and pulling that you really have to concentrate on your steering. And, your tires will wear out quickly if you don't get straightened out!

Since God so often addresses wives before He does husbands in the passages that pertain to marriage, I'm going to focus on women and your particular role if our Lord has brought you into a marriage covenant.

Marriages get out of alignment when husbands and wives disregard our Father's design. Let's allow Paul's exhortation to really soak into our hearts regardless of our culture's disclaimer of his words: "*I wish you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the **head of a woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God***" (1 Corinthians 11:3).

The apostle repeats this concept in Ephesians 5:22-24, addressing a group of women believers whose culture was as decadent and lawless as our own:

*Wives are subject to their own husbands as to the Lord because **a man is head of the woman as also Christ is head of the church, Himself the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives are subject to their husbands in everything.*** (These translations are from the original Greek.)

This position would seem to place us wives in a pretty precarious place except for our Father's loving care to command our husbands to love us *just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her!*

Does that mean I have the right to wait to submit until my husband fits the parameters established for him by God? **No way!** The "wife" words apply to *me* (and to *you* if you're a wife!), and when our Father speaks, He's needling right into our hearts and spirits directly to trust Him and to evidence that trust by obeying Him.

Along with aligning ourselves according to His Way, we also need to discover and walk in the *role* He's given us as wives and/or mothers. In the Word some verses are assigned specifically to men and some just for women. But for the most part, the commands belong to *all*

of us. (And there are almost twice as many *commands* in the Newer Testament as there are in the Hebrew Scriptures!)

I'd like to share some insights from an intertestament book of wisdom penned by the Jewish sage Sirach. These words complement other verses directed to us women. When I'm able to bring joy, peace and blessing to my husband, *I'm* reaping the rewards of *shalom* in our home as well!

*Happy is the husband of a **good wife**; the number of his days will be doubled. A **loyal wife** brings joy to her husband, and he will complete his years in peace. A good wife is a **great blessing**; she will be granted among the blessings of the man who fears the Lord. Whether rich or poor, his heart is content, and at all times his face is cheerful* (Sirach 26:1-4).

The writer continues in the vein of the man who extols the virtuous wife in Proverbs 31, encouraging each of us to make the most of every opportunity to walk in our Lord's covenant pathway!

*A **wife's charm** delights her husband, and **her skill** puts flesh on her bones... Like the sun rising in the heights of the Lord, so is the beauty of a **good wife** in her **well-ordered home**...A wife **honoring her husband** will seem **wise** to all* (Sirach 26:13,16,26a).

You might be thinking that these descriptions are either impossible or irrelevant for you. But just as in Proverbs 31, they are a *goal at which to aim* on your pilgrimage as a woman who wants to please her God.

As you walk in these elements of godly wifeness, you'll surprise your man and contribute to the well-being

and atmosphere of your home. Just be sure that you aren't putting undue pressure on yourself as to what constitutes a "good wife" and a "well-ordered home." Talk with your husband about what brings peace to *both of you* so you can both live in harmony.

For instance, Mike really enjoys cooking good meals, while I could skip a couple meals or munch on celery and be perfectly happy. I don't mind doing laundry and vacuuming, but if these interfere with the editing and writing that's more important to our purpose as a couple, then he'll jump in to help with these chores.

You and your husband need to determine *your* roles according to our Father's will as revealed by His Spirit in His Word and in prayer together. Then decide which "Martha" activities can slide so that a peaceable "Mary" companionship exists when you're together!

How clearly would you say you and your husband understand your respective roles and responsibility to God? Poor? Adequate? Great? Are you both willing to talk about this until you reach a compatible decision?

Do you find yourself exercising control by taking responsibility for your husband's role? Yes or no? If yes, what do you do to usurp his responsibilities?

Do you find yourself initiating and doing things you hope he won't find out about? Yes or no? If yes, what do you do?

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

If you've discovered areas in this lesson that need to be changed in you:

1. Repent of any sin (Psalms 103:11,12; Isaiah 43:25).
2. Don't let up on seeking the Spirit's help until the way of the character of Jesus is formed in you (Matthew 7:7,8).
3. And don't lose sight that our Father is merciful and longsuffering. If you stay repentant, He will continue to readily forgive and restore (Isaiah 30:18).

Don't stop on your pilgrimage until the character of Jesus is completely formed in you! Press on, dear ones:

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).