

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 39

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth:

• *Encouragement For Couples*

1. Learn From The Heart Of David
2. Make It Easy To Be Respected
3. Make Your Home A Sanctuary
4. The Wedding Vase
5. *Rhema*, Seeking God's Specific Guidance
6. Establish *Halakhahs* For Your Family
7. Be A Person Of Wisdom
8. Establish Truth Through Discussion



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Introduction

In this lesson and the next we'll focus on marriage, our Lord's foundational means of producing godly generations. We trust that the points we share will help you married couples as you work together in your sanctification. (If you're not married, many of these issues still apply to your life. But, we're especially focusing on the married since so much is at stake for them in a culture that's determined to tear couples apart.)

Older couples have a special responsibility in our Lord's service, and we'll discuss them more fully in the lessons on the extended spiritual family of the home fellowship.

If you're among the more senior, pay close attention to areas of **sanctification** and **relational development** that you might have missed earlier in your marriage. It's never too late to grow in your availability to serve our Lord's purposes or to deepen your love for Him and for one another. You have much to share from what you're continuing to learn!

From Mike especially for men:

1. Learn From The Heart Of David

"I have found David son of Jesse a man after My own heart; he will do everything I want him to do"

(Acts 13:22).

Picture our Lord saying "**(your name)** is a man after my own heart." If this could be said about David, an adulterer and murderer, have confidence that God can speak these words about you as well!

David may have sinned grievously, but he was a man with a **repentant heart**. Like Abraham and Moses before him, he was guided by **Theocracy in his heart**—an awareness and recognition of God's place in all matters of his life.

"Theocracy in a man's heart" is analogous to the **"kingdom of God"** or **"kingdom of heaven"**. If you're a man after God's heart, you refrain from being motivated by the things of this world (see 1 John 2:15-17). Instead, you see yourself as an instrument through which our Father extends His Kingdom on earth.

What are some of the character qualities of David that can guide your own life? Fill in the series of questions below, then discuss them with your spouse and others close to you in the faith. Solicit feedback to determine how closely your walk with our Lord mirrors that of David.

1. David sought God's guidance, His *rhema* (1 Samuel 30:8; 2 Samuel 5:23).

- Are you a man who seeks the revealed will of God for yourself and your family? Yes or no? If yes, in what specific ways has God guided you? How did He reveal His particular will (*rhema*)"? If no, why aren't you seeking His guidance?

We'll discuss *rhema* again later in this lesson.

2. David hungered for God's Word to discover what pleases Him and to discern the boundaries that would keep him from sin.

- "*I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You*" (Psalm 119:11). A love relationship with God (as well as with others) stirs you to find out what *pleases* Him. Your goal is *not* to know Bible facts but, out of love, to discern the freedom and boundaries of your relationship with our Lord and to walk in them. Would people describe you as a man who hungers after God's Word with *loving purpose*? Is that *your* motivation?

3. David was a just man who purposed to not treat others in a way he would not want to be treated (even if he fell short at times) (1 Samuel 30:24,25; Matthew 7:12).

- Remember that justice is first and foremost a heart issue — treat others as you want to be treated. Is this how those close to you see you? Are there areas in which you are unjust?

4. David quickly repented when confronted with his sin (Psalm 32; 38:18).

- A quick willingness to truly repent indicates a humble heart. When you've done wrong or caused emotional pain, do you repent because you feel the *hurt you've caused*, or must you be convinced and persuaded that you've wronged someone?

5. David never excused himself for his wrongdoing nor did he blame anyone else (2 Samuel 12:13).

- Remember that your authority is based on not "passing the buck." When something goes wrong, are you a person who quickly explains his side in order to justify your actions? Are there others close to you who live in apprehension that you will blame them?

6. David knew God as his only Provider (Psalm 34:10; 65:9; 84:11).

- God’s Word tells us to neither worry about provision nor to relish our wealth. Explain your view of money and God’s hand in providing for you. Does your perspective concur with the Bible’s teaching?

- Share your view of money and God’s hand in provision for you with those close to you. Do they agree that your explanation authenticates what they see in your life?

No matter what you’ve filled in above or what feedback you’ve received, please don’t get hung up on your shortcomings. With so few men available as godly mentors within faith communities, younger men have struggled for years without proper feedback as to how their Christian walk comes across to others. Feedback is vital, however. It keeps us humble and prevents us from plowing ahead like a “bull in a china shop.”

Based on what you’ve found out about yourself from the questions and discussion:

- If you need to repent, then repent.
- If you need help from those close to you, humble yourself and ask.
- If you find anything lacking in your character, with God’s grace correct it .

From Mike especially for men:

2. Make It Easy To Be Respected

“However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband”
(Ephesians 5:33).

During women’s retreats we’d often ask wives about their feelings and attitude toward their husbands. One of the more frequent statements indicated:

“I love the man, but I don’t like him.”

As we probed, it became clear that it was difficult for many to respect their husbands. They weren’t able to see in their men the humility and concern for God’s principles that He calls for in family leadership.

The command for a wife to respect her husband has too often been misused as a unilateral demand from men. Respect regards the *manner in which a person leads and exercises authority*; therefore it must be earned.

Your wife may humbly give you deference because of your position of authority, but that doesn’t cause her to respect you as the servant-leader of your home.

To love as Jesus calls for, we men humbly owe it to our wives to make it easy for them to respect us.

If it’s hard for your wife to respect you, then ***both of you together*** need to be diligent to solve this dilemma. A man who doesn’t do all God requires to be respected abides in hidden sin, or is entertaining idols in his heart (see Lesson 26). If you love your wife, you need to eliminate whatever hinders her from fulfilling God’s command to respect you.

Blessed is the wife whose husband is in relationship with an older, wiser man

who operates as a father in his life to role-model Christ-likeness and confront him to enable him to change.

This man is developing into a husband that his wife finds easy to respect! A man who lacks the wise counsel and advice of older men will thrust upon his wife the difficult burden of trying to respect a foolish husband.

Describe the level of respect you think your wife, children and others have for you.

For a wife: Describe your level of respect for your husband. What can he do to make it easier for you to respect him?

Whatever needs to be changed, work at it together because it's a predicament for *both* of you. Finger pointing only compounds the problem.

From Sue especially for women:

3. Make Your Home A *Sanctuary*

(Hebrew: *shalom bayit*, house of peace).

“The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down” (Proverbs 14:1).

Despite the prevalence of wives and mothers in the workplace, the home still represents the heart of a woman's influence. [We'll discuss this more fully in Lesson 41.]

Did you know that marriages in which the wife works *outside the home* have a much higher divorce rate than those of women who stay home? In fact, whether rich or poor, mothers who work outside their home lead this nation in divorce.

Why do you think this is? Can working outside the home contribute to the spirit of ***independence*** and ***divorce*** growing in her heart? You can bet on it!

Hebraic believers recognized a woman's great worth as she raised godly children and maintained *shalom bayit*, the harmony and peace of the home (1 Timothy 2:15). In biblical times the *family* rather than the individual was the basic unit of society. A woman was always seen in the context of her family.

A woman's connectedness came through her husband or her father, the ones God had raised up to provide for and protect her. If her husband died while she was still young, a widow was counseled to remarry so that she not eat the bread of idleness through gossip:

*Therefore, I would rather the young widows get married, **have children and take charge of their homes**, so as to give the opposition no occasion for slandering us* (1 Timothy 5:14, CJB).

A wife and mother was treasured because of her honored role in the home. On each weekly Sabbath a husband celebrated his wife as he extolled her by reading Proverbs 31:10-31 (actually, in Jesus's time, the husband sang it to her!).

The truths from those verses were a reminder of the parameters of a godly woman, and a goal at which to aim. They also reminded the couple of the ***interdependent relationship*** they had in

their sanctification together, and the wife's role in her husband's journey toward being a *zaken*, a wise elder (see 1 Timothy 3:4,5).

If there was lack of peace between the spouses, the relationship needed to be repaired before the Proverbs passage was read so that hypocrisy would not discolor their Sabbath celebration. In fact, knowing the passage was going to be read often drove a couple to deal with their problems before the Sabbath arrived.

Because marriage was a sacred trust the husband recognized that his wife was consecrated to him, *set apart* for a unique relationship. (There's a wonderful spiritual parallel here as the called-out ones of Jesus are set apart as His betrothed Bride!)

As the Holy Spirit guides your husband, he may want to read Proverbs 31:10-31 to you while your children are present. Such expressive appreciation not only affirms your worth to your family but sets before you aspirations of godliness that the Spirit can accomplish in you by grace!

A number of mothers have discovered the joy of establishing businesses *in their home*, even involving their children in the production end if that's part of their particular endeavor. Some have found it helpful to hire a teenage sitter or exchange caregiving hours with other mothers to be able to concentrate several hours at a time on their home business pursuit.

Contributing to your family's income and finding creative joy at the same time is scriptural! But prioritizing your day so that you fulfill your responsibilities to your husband and children is key.

In your home how are you honored by your husband in your children's presence? Do you feel honored in your family? Yes or no? If no, what is lacking?

Are you a wife or mother who works outside your home? Yes or no? If yes, write out with your husband the biblical responsibilities God has given you as a wife and mother.

(Keep in mind that Proverbs 31 refers to the wife of an *elder*, not a younger woman with children at home.)

A Visual Image Of Covenant Union:

4. The Wedding Vase

To be in covenant with someone means that you're *yoked together as one*. As you meet the conditions of our Father's Covenant through Jesus, you become one with Him—totally united as you're sealed with the Holy Spirit. This *union* is our Father's intent for your marriage covenant.

Many Native Americans give a wedding vase (shown right) to a couple on their wedding day. The vase has two spouts, one representing the bride and the other the groom. If the couple are followers of Jesus, the handle at the top that connects the two spouts pictures the Spirit holding them together.



er and steadying them in the trials of life.

Through the wedding vase we clearly see our Father's concept of covenants. Because of how dissimilar they are, the husband and wife are like oil and water. Yet, as they're shaken together through shared trials and sufferings, the two are mixed. A union occurs. Then, when the husband or wife "pours out" from their respective spouts, they're bringing forth a mixture of their combined essence.

Does the wedding vase represent your marriage right now? Yes or no? In what ways is your marriage covenant reflecting Jesus to the world? And, in what ways is your marriage hindering the world from seeing Jesus through you?

From Mike especially for men:

5. *Rhema*, Seeking God's Specific Guidance

"He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Because it's vital that you be a man your wife can respect, we want to reinforce that you make *seeking God's guidance* a key part of your life.

As we mentioned in an earlier lesson, *rhema* is that specific word spoken

directly and individually from God to His people. Through *rhema* the Holy Spirit reveals God's specific will and guidance for you or your family.

Seeking the *rhema* of the Holy Spirit is humbling to a male's sinful, self-confident nature. The purpose for seeking *rhema* is for men what gathering manna was for the Israelites:

He gave them manna to eat in the desert... to humble and to test them so that in the end it might go well with them" (Deuteronomy 8:16).

We'd occasionally ask wives on retreat, "How could your husband make it easier for you to respect him?" The most common answers? "I'd respect him more if he were a man who *sought God*." "If he hungered to *know God more*, I'd find it easier to respect him."

Paul encapsulates the desires of these wives in his instruction to *live by* the Spirit, and *keep in step* with the Spirit (see Galatians 5:25). This is God's pattern for males as spiritually mature husbands.

A married man is directed to know God's will and commands for his family:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word (Ephesians 5:25,26).

The statement "*cleansing her by the washing with water through the word*" indicates a vital role for a husband in his wife's spiritual development. Remember, the term used for "word" here, *rhema*, means more than quoting Bible verses to your spouse.

There are two words in the Bible which, when translated into English, mean “word.” These terms are *logos* and *rhema*. *Logos* represents God’s ways and thoughts, forever unchangeable. The Bible is a part of God’s *logos* written down for man.

Rhema is that specific word spoken directly and individually from God to you. As a husband you must seek God’s guidance, the *rhema*, for both you and your wife since you’re joined in covenant union. This may come as the Spirit quickens a particular Scripture. At other times a specific word comes for you through a prophecy or a word of knowledge.

Never forget that with God’s *rhema* comes His power to fulfill it.

For the wife: Describe the nature of your respect for your husband. How is he doing in seeking God’s guidance for you as a family?

As you read the following anecdote, ask yourself from God’s perspective, “Is this how foolish I am when I complacently act on my own without seeking my Father’s guidance first?”

TRYING TO DO THE JOB ALONE

Dear Sir:

I am writing in response to your request for additional information. In block number 3 of the accident reporting form, I put "trying to do the job alone" as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully and I trust that the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the date of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-storey building. When I completed my work, I discovered that I had about 500 pounds of brick left over. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which fortunately was attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out, and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went back to the ground and untied the rope, holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 500 pounds of brick. You will note in block number eleven of the accident report form that I weigh 135 pounds.

Due to my surprise of being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope.

Needless to say I proceeded at a rather rapid rate up the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming down. This explains the fractured skull and broken collarbone. Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope in spite of my pain.

At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of brick hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighs approximately fifty pounds. I refer you again to my weight in block number eleven.

As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations on my legs and lower body. The encounter with the bar-

rel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell onto the pile of bricks and, fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked.

I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks, in pain and unable to stand, and watching the empty barrel six stories above me, I again lost my presence of mind and I let go of the rope. The empty barrel weighed more than the rope so it came back down on me and broke both of my legs.

I hope I have furnished the information you require as how the accident occurred.

From Mike especially for men:

6. Establish *Halakhahs* For Your Family

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24).

If you recall from an earlier lesson, a *halakhah* is the way God’s word is interpreted and applied to a particular situation. The emphasis is not on interpretation of verses alone but on *applying the Bible correctly* to a situation.

We taught our son Mike to prayerfully apply God’s Word, i.e., establish *halakhahs*, ever since he was a young boy. The following anecdote shows just how deeply this practice became a guiding life principle for him as he matured.

Mike worked in the seafood department of a large supermarket. He’d been hired with the understanding that he wouldn’t have to work on Sundays, our Sabbath day as a family.

One Saturday his supervisor asked if he would work one Sunday a month. When Mike came home he asked me about working on Sundays. As he thought about God’s commands, he became convinced he couldn’t work

on Sunday because that was his Sabbath.

As he was reading his Bible the next morning he "accidentally" opened to the last chapter of Nehemiah. His eyes fell on this passage:

[Nehemiah speaking] *In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses **on the Sabbath** and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem **on the Sabbath**. Therefore I warned them against **selling food on that day**. Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were **bringing in fish** and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem **on the Sabbath** to the people of Judah* (vv.15,16).

When he saw the words "*bringing in fish*", Mike sensed the Spirit’s confirmation of his decision the day before, and he was greatly strengthened in his resolve. I told him that he would be tested as all God’s people are over their convictions. On Monday, his supervisor approached him to order him to work on Sundays. My son reaffirmed his biblical position and his supervisor rescinded his demand.

When you take the time and effort to establish *halakhahs*, you’re opening the way for the Bible to do what it does well—***it exposes the motives of your heart***. The writer to the Hebrews was referring to the Older Testament, but ALL of God’s Word pierces your heart:

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Years ago I counseled church leaders. One day I was invited to attend a deacons’

meeting to help in a disagreement about whether to pave the church parking lot. After the opening prayer they began to argue. I stopped them and said, “Let’s look into the Bible and see what God has to say about parking lots.” A cynical retort came, “There’s nothing in the Bible about parking lots!”

I took them through the steps of establishing *halakhahs*. When we finished they were convicted that the only reason some wanted the lot paved was because the congregation down the street had recently paved theirs.

God’s Word exposed their motive of envy and pride. The other verses they found convicted them to spend more time and resources caring for the widows and other needy in their faith community.

Truth and testing—how inseparable they are in your faith journey!
[We’ve written a guide for establishing biblical applications which we encourage you to utilize, [Christian Halakhahs; Loving Jesus Through the Way You Apply His Word.](#)]

How would you evaluate your efforts to establish *halakhahs* in your home? If you haven’t done so, what has hindered you?

Ask your wife and family for their comments.

For Both Husbands and Wives:

7. Be A Person Of Wisdom

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10).

- **Wisdom** is seeing life from God’s perspective and principles.

Wisdom causes us to scrutinize our lives in light of His Word.

Wisdom seeks to please the Lord and fulfill His purposes.

Wisdom will always cause us to trust our Lord Jesus more and more.

- **Reason** is viewing life from our own perspective. Reason always relies on rationalization and results in disillusionment, despair and fear. Leaning on our own reasoning rather than seeking God’s wisdom often escalates small problems into deep pits.

The author of Ecclesiastes seems to have understood the two paths people choose in life:

For to the man who is good from [God’s] viewpoint He gives wisdom, knowledge and joy; but to the sinner He gives the task of collecting and accumulating things to leave to him who is good from God’s viewpoint. This too is pointless and feeding on wind (2:26,CJB).

A profound conclusion about life follows the writer’s discourse: ***“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man”*** (12:13).

Do you think that this admonition that ties in holy fear of God with obedient trust is just “Older Testament” theology for the Jews? Jesus tells us otherwise, ***“For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother”*** (Matthew 12:50). Wisdom is found in those who *do God’s will*; this confirms their relationship to Jesus.

It is meaningless for anyone to call himself “a follower of Jesus” and yet fail to keep the criteria established by Jesus for being among His family:

If you keep My commands, you will stay in My love—just as I have kept My Father’s commands and stay in His love (John 15:10,CJB).

Which path are you following? Do you seek a way of life which pleases your Father? Would you be considered wise in His ways?

Or, do you strive for those things which He must in time take from you and give to the one who does please Him? The writer of Ecclesiastes would call that “meaningless.”

Ask your spouse and family for their comments.

For Both Husbands and Wives:

8. Establish Truth Through Discussion

“For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst” (Matthew 18:20).

Way back in Lesson 2 we spoke of how important *discussion* was for our Hebraic forefathers. No man who studies the Hebraic foundations on his own can be changed unless he discusses these truths with his wife or with those who are within his extended spiritual family. Discussion among two or three is key.

Points we shared in that Lesson:

1. ***Discuss these truths with others*** who will press on in the faith with you. Discussion is the Hebraic methodology of pursuing truth and *applying* it. In fact, the rabbis of the Hebraic Stream taught that whenever two or three discussed God’s Word, the Holy Spirit was with them to give *understanding and application*.

Jesus affirms this same truth in Matthew 18:20. The presence of Jesus in your midst as you pursue truth makes all the difference. He stirs you to *put it into practice!*

2. ***Be patient with yourself.*** Remember, you’re on a pilgrimage to your salvation, when your name will be proclaimed to the hosts of heaven. Your **conversion** is really the beginning of your pilgrimage OUT of the world’s values and goals, and INTO the Kingdom’s values and purposes.

In your discussion, emphasize ***“what’s right before God”***, not ***“who’s right”***. Don’t be too hasty to come to a resolution. God wants each member of your family or faith community to develop spiritual maturity by learning to think for himself and take responsibility for his own convictions. That won’t happen if people lean on the input of just one person.

Your pilgrimage to salvation as you work it out together is *transformational*. The cooperative process of change is best seen in the increased Christ-likeness that is manifested in each of you. Be aware that as you apply the different Hebraic

foundations within your family, business or faith community, you *will* face:

- a season for **separation** from your past relationships and lifestyle patterns.
- a time of **initiation** into living by the new truths you're applying.
- a period of **transition** for you and your family, faith community or business as you grow in your conviction to live by the new truths.
- the possibility for **confusion** as the adjustments are taking place.

Among the thousands of people we served in our years at the retreat center, there was a paucity of couples who discussed God's truth together for application. May that not be so for you.

Do you discuss God's truth for application with your spouse or others close to you in the faith? What changes do you need to make in order for this to become a priority?

Ask your spouse and family for their input.

“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 things 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 that is in 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 radically 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).