



"Man, made in the image of God, has a purpose—to be in relationship to God, who is there. Man forgets his purpose and thus he forgets who he is and what life means."

—Francis Schaeffer

12-Feb-10

Marriage—A God-Plane Relationship (Part Four)

Psalm 128 illustrates how properly honoring and working with [God](#) within marriage and the family produces the finest product for His Kingdom:

Blessed is every one who fears the LOORD, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LOORD. The LOORD bless you out of Zion, and may you see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life. Yes, may you see your children's children. [Peace](#) be upon Israel! ([Psalm 128:1-6](#))

Notice how positive this psalm is! The whole process begins with a proper fear of the Lord, and from that foundation, blessing radiates out to the whole family. When the fear of the Lord forms the basis for a marriage, the couple is starting out their marriage properly, and they can expect good results—positive fruit—in time.

Because a man and his wife begin on the proper footing—and it is assumed that they continue in it—they will find happiness, satisfaction, unity, and of course, blessedness. There is even the good possibility of a long, fulfilling life. God presents a family that is

content and fruitful, full of potential for growth and expansion.

Moreover, the last sentence in Psalm 128 suggests that such families bring peace to the whole nation! [James 3:18](#) reads: "Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who [make peace](#)." An environment of peace—what is found in a God-fearing home—provides the ideal setting for the growth of righteousness and its fruit. Such homes produce upstanding, productive individuals who build society, not tear it down with hostile acts that disturb the peace. Ultimately, the entire nation benefits from the godly fear practiced and taught in Christian families.

This is what God wants. He is looking for a home for His offspring in which this peaceful environment will be created in order to produce children in His image—godly seed. In [Malachi 2:13-16](#), God is quite displeased with His people because their marriage relationships had degenerated to the point that husbands were treacherously divorcing their wives for inconsequential reasons, breaking the covenant, the vow, that they had made. They were not creating the proper environment for producing godly seed for His Family.

This third purpose for marriage is a very important one—to produce the right environment for raising children, not for just one's own family, but for God. Again, we see that the physical mirrors the spiritual in this relationship. Even though we are physical beings, God has given us a spiritual component that makes us different from the animals, and when He calls us into His church, He gives us an additional element, His Spirit, that elevates our purpose to a far higher plane. Thus, there is always a higher purpose in everything that we do. We cannot avoid it, as it is the overriding purpose of God Himself.

A fourth purpose for marriage is also found in [Genesis 1:28](#): "God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" The two key words here are "subdue" and "dominion," both of which are terms of command and control. The fourth purpose, then, deals with marriage providing a basis for proper government.

"Dominion" has thrown many people off-track, assuming that God means autocratic, despotic rule. However, any dictionary will show that *dominion* is nothing more than "supreme authority" or "sovereignty." The Hebrew word, *radâ*, implies exercising authority over those who are under one's control, whether a king over his kingdom or an employer over his employees. It does not necessarily suggest harsh, cruel governance.

"Subdue" (Hebrew *kabaš*), however, can have this implication. Nevertheless, subjecting creation to human benefit or people to God's way does not have to be done with rigor. Severity should be applied only when there is steadfast, defiant resistance, and then only as necessary. The two words together provide a wide range of means for mankind to order and govern what he has been given. Of course, God does not intend for humanity to go beyond the authority He has entrusted to it, either in terms of scope or of application.

So, as these opening instructions to mankind indicate, God uses marriage to teach us how to govern. Marriage teaches us how it is done best, specifically as God Himself governs. God is a Father, and He has a Son who is the Head of the church. We in the church comprise the Son's wife, His Bride, and we are learning how to rule with the Son forever in His Kingdom. A primary institution that God created to teach us this is marriage, the very same institution into which we will soon enter with His Son. Again, we see the physical blending into the spiritual.

In our physical lives, most of us begin to live within the family as a child, and from that position of weakness and immaturity, we learn how to be ruled, to submit, and to learn and grow as a subordinate. We learn what it is like to be under authority. Later, as we grow in maturity, we take on more responsibilities and experience more freedom. If we are alert and smart, we learn many facets of how to rule ourselves and thus how to govern others.

When ready, we take up the challenge of living at the next level of authority as a husband or wife. We learn, in that role, other things that teach us about government and how best to handle situations. First, we must become accustomed to living with our new mate, ruling ourselves and providing direction to a developing family as a spouse.

Then, sometimes suddenly, we have to learn how to govern little ones. As they grow, we learn different ways—better ways—to govern them at their various levels. The diverse situations that arise in life lend themselves to learning new and different approaches that will lead to better outcomes. The family and our changing roles within it teach us how to do that.

The godly family, beginning with marriage followed by the rearing of children, teaches us how to govern. Along with the Bible, it gives us most, if not all, the necessary instruction that we need. These experiences over time become part of our characters, which we will carry through the grave. We will have those experiences to draw upon when similar instances arise among those who will be subject to us into God's Kingdom.

CGG Weekly: Marriage—A God-Plane Relationship (Part Four) (12-Feb-10)

The basic tools, provided to us through God's instruction and applied in the Christian family, prepare us to rule in God's Kingdom and to teach the right and proper way to live.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[The Fear of God](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The church at large has downplayed the fuller dimension of the fear of God by emphasizing awe, respect, or reverence, while ignoring its other dimensions such as fright, dread, or terror. Consequently, many have inadvertently adopted a soft concept of God, disrespecting and showing contempt for God's authority and power. Mistakenly, we transfer or appropriate our fear to human beings, who cannot revoke the penalty of death hanging over us. When Moses and Isaiah recognized God's presence, they became aware of their own vileness in comparison to God's holiness and power. By legitimately fearing God, we lose our human terror, finding sanctuary in God Almighty. Godly fear is a gift given to us as a result of His calling, compelling submission to His purpose and leading to godly knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Remnant](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

The subject of a remnant occurs 540 times in the Bible! What is a remnant? How does it apply in this end time? How does it apply to the church?

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