Righteous Relationships

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"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Malachi 4:5-6

I. The PROPHECY

A. Elijah the prophet would come before the great and terrible day of the Lord.

B. John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy before Jerusalem's destruction (Luke 1:17).

C. A people prepared for the Lord included restoration of parent-child relationships.
   1. Note the practical nature of John's required repentance (Luke 3:10-14).
   2. Wrong relationships bring a curse; the LORD requires right relationships.
   3. The Word of God emphasizes the importance of parent-child relationships.

D. Today we are dealing with marriages, parent-child, and brotherly relationships.

II. The PROBLEM

A. Perilous times of the last days include child rebellion (II Timothy 3:1-5).

B. God's judgments on men include sodomy and child rebellion (Rom 1:29-31).

C. A judgment of God against Israel was to take away their men (Isaiah 3:1-26).

D. Marriage is also a relationship that is sorely neglected and abused today.

E. Bad marriages, families, and churches are a reason for blasphemy (Titus 2:5).

F. Our marriages, families, and church ought to be a shining example to the world.

G. Because you don't do heroin, sell porno to children, go to Catholic Mass, have a Buddha in your backyard, watch television, drink beer, wear immodest sweaters, or allow rock music is not proof of very much at all, if your relationships are poor.

III. The PERILS

A. Foolish children are the calamity and shame of parents (Pr 10:1; 17:21,25; 19:13).

B. An unhappy marriage is worse than death (Eccl 7:26; Proverbs 30:21-23; 21:9,19).

C. We are not a people prepared for the Lord and prayers are hindered (I Peter 3:7).

D. Even the youth can rank the marriages from best to worst very easily, and I am not talking about your children. If others can see your problems, what about the LORD?

E. The way of transgressors is hard (Prov 13:15). Trouble will come to punish you.

F. If you are a foolish child, you forfeit a great reward and bring judgment (Eph 6:3).

IV. The RULES

A. SCRIPTURE IS THE ONLY AUTHORITY AND MEASURE
   1. All instruction necessary is in the Bible (Psalm 119:99-100; II Tim 3:16-17).
   2. We may believe “every word of God,” but our living it is far more important.
   3. Ideas from examples, experiences, feelings, thoughts, or conscience are vain.
   4. The “advances” of our modern society have only perverted relationships.
   5. Books, seminars, tapes, and radio programs have not had godly fruit.
   6. There is lots of learning, but it has not resulted in truth (II Timothy 3:7).
   7. There is NO LIGHT in modern modifications of the Bible absolutes (Is 8:20).
   8. The Bible seems Neanderthal to the modern man, but Let God Be True!
   9. It doesn’t matter if you and your family agree on doing it differently. It is sin.
   10. Fatherhood is not causing babies or raising babies. It is training godly babies.

B. GOD WISELY CHOSE THE OFFICES
   1. God chose to create us as helpless infants rather than a grown Adam or Eve.
   2. God ordained marriage to solve man’s loneliness and woman’s protection.
   3. God ordained families for companionship, nurturing, training, and worship.
   4. God ordained churches for our mutual assistance and corporate worship.
   5. Husbands over wives and parents over children is not an option nor vague.

C. GOD SOVEREIGNLY CHOSE THE PERSONS
   1. You were not asked at all about your parents – genetically or practically; and they have enormous consequences on every aspect of your natural life.
   2. Whether you think you chose your spouse or not, God chose them for you.
   3. And the members in every church are by God’s choice also (I Cor 12:18).

D. SUBMISSION IS ESSENTIAL FOR AUTHORITY TO EXIST
   1. Authority exists either by sheer terror or by the consent of those under it.
   2. God has stated His mind regarding this matter, so we submit in holy fear.
   3. We first meet authority in our parents, who absolutely dominate our lives.
   4. Love, kindness, and fairness are not essential for authority, but submission is.
   5. Children, wives, and servants are addressed first in the Biblical order.
   6. Families and marriage can exist without love, but not without submission.
   7. Submission done grudgingly leaves both parties hurt, angry, and bitter.
   8. All men submit, so children and women should not feel isolated at all.
   9. Women use many excuses why they are not perfect wives, but it is sin.
   10. Children must obey and reverence parents, and wives husbands.

11. Make sure you are defining submission God's way; it has nothing to do with what your husband/father expects, requests, demands, accepts, or likes.
12. Go to the Word of God and be that kind of a wife or child. Any less is sin.

E. AUTHORITY IS REQUIRED TO ENFORCE AND ATTRACT SUBMISSION
1. Once a relationship has been achieved by consent of those in subjection, then those in authority are bound by God to enforce and win submission.
2. Young men are asked to join the army, but they are not asked anything again.
3. A man proposes, but it is duty and wisdom to seduce and rule her (De 24:5).
4. You cannot give up and say I just can't get my wife or children to obey, it is your duty before God to expect and receive obedience and reverence.
5. You cannot think leadership and rule is an option; it is God's wise precept.

F. FAITH TRUSTS GOD TO REWARD DILIGENCE
1. Satan says, "If you give all you should give, they will take advantage of you."
2. Satan says, "If you give all you should give, you will have nothing for you."
3. Satan says, "If you give all you should give, how will that make you happy?"
4. Satan says, "It takes two to make a happy marriage. It is a two-way street."
5. Satan says, "This extreme preacher only talks of those with perfect spouses."
6. Satan says, "If you don't rebel and contend a little, things will fall apart."
7. Satan says, "They can do it just fine without you."
8. Satan says, "If you take the authority and lead, you will make mistakes."
9. Satan says, "If you take the authority and lead, you will lose your family."
10. It is easy to read and memorize Hebrews 11:6, but we must practice it.

G. SELFISHNESS IS THE GREATEST CURSE
1. Most every single problem in relationships may be traced back to selfishness.
2. What keeps you from the top five things you should do in relationships?
3. How can one saved by the gracious sacrifice of Jesus Christ be selfish?
4. We are to think upon the things of others more than our own (Phil 2:3-4).
5. Loving others as much as we love ourselves is the cure for all problems.
6. Pagans, including "Christian counselors," promote self-love and self-esteem.
7. The only thing holding you back from happiness is YOUR selfish pride.
8. Selfishness says, "If they would treat me better, I would treat them better."
9. Selfishness says, "Look, neat marriage ideas, now my husband can love me."
10. Selfishness says, "I always do what they ask." But what about initiative?

H. H. GIVING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN RECEIVING
1. Jesus said it is more blessed to given than to receive. Try it sometime.
2. But if I am giving all the time, when will I get? You will obtain the greatest pleasure in giving, and true

giving works with God's help 100% of the time.

3. If both sides are waiting to get more from the other, NOTHING IMPROVES.
4. We call the golden rule treating others as we desire to be treated FIRST.
5. We are called to be a tree of life and soul winners – even in our relationships.

I. SINCERITY IS THE APPRECIATION OF CORRECTION

1. The sincerity of submission and your desire for godly relationships is proven by your willingness to be corrected and make sacrificial changes.
2. True wisdom is most easily defined and shown by love of correction.
3. The testiness of a person is a certain indicator of relationship problems.
4. Self-righteousness is one of the most horrible and dangerous sins from hell.
   a. It is difficult to say you are wrong, foolish, and stupid.
   b. It is confidence you are quite competent, intelligent, and capable.
   c. It is enjoying finding or discussing the faults or weaknesses of others.
   d. It is presuming to accuse others, when you have your own set of sins.
   e. It is always having an opinion about the conduct of others.
   f. It is the defensiveness and testiness of resisting correction.
   g. It is the presumption of making judgments about those in authority.
   h. It is the ease with which you can apply a sermon to most anyone else.
   i. It is the thought during a sermon that your relationships are not bad.
   j. It is the response that I am comfortable with things as they are.

J. KNOWLEDGE OF THE OTHER IS NECESSARY

1. Husbands are to live with wives in knowledge – explore and learn (I Pet 3:7).
2. Remember again, the Lord provided for one year to cheer up his wife.
3. Fathers are to know their children and capacities (Eph 6:4; Psalm 103:13-14).
4. Men must learn to explore, inquire, learn, confront, and listen with wise rule.

K. EXPLORATION AND CONFRONTATION ARE REQUIRED

1. True love includes confrontation (Leviticus 19:17; Hebrews 12:1-5).
2. Of course, those under authority must have a great cause and great discretion.
3. No sincere and godly person under authority will open and confess at once.
4. Brotherly love includes warning, comfort, support, and showing patience.

L. RELATIONSHIPS ARE A COMMANDMENT, NOT AN OPTION

1. We are not dealing with . . . "If you want to improve your relationships."
2. We are dealing with . . . "Thus saith the Lord."
3. We are dealing with . . . "The way of transgressors is hard."
4. You do not have the right to consider this sermon. You must obey it!
5. You cannot say, "We have agreed to have a marriage like this", if it differs from God's holy,

authoritative, romantic, sexual, model.

M. PRIORITY MEANS TO DO IT NOW
   1. We must DO this sermon, and we must do it NOW. We cannot procrastinate.
   2. Remember, repent, and do the first works (Rev 2:5).
   3. What else do you need to hear? God said it; we believe it; that settles it.
   4. Delay means to despise the Spirit of God, punish another, and be a masochist.
   5. Nothing should come before these primary relationships – nothing!
   6. Why and how did this sermon occur? By the grace of the living God! Use it!
   7. Don't lie to God you don't have time. Buy back time by quitting something.
   8. Don't wait for convenience like Felix – such a day never arrives (Acts 24:25).
   9. Train children betimes – early in life while there is hope (Prov 13:24; 19:18).

N. YOU CAN DO IT AND GOD WILL BLESS IT
   1. God has given and will yet give the strength and power to do all required.
   2. Do you have faith? God is? God is a rewarder of diligent seekers?
   3. There is no temperamental, historical, or practical limitation upon you.
   4. Jesus Christ by His Spirit is within you with all strength needed (Phil 4:13).
   5. God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:1-4).

O. COMPROMISE IS ONLY AND ABSOLUTELY REBELLION
   1. If you do not fully and totally change all that is lacking today, you are a fool.
   2. Saul spared Agag and the choice animals for sacrifice – which was rebellion.
   3. We know so much; we could glorify God so much; we could commend truth so much; we could love others so much; so compromise is profane hatred.
   4. If there are not clear changes in your marriage immediately, you are sinning.