

The Refuge of the Home:

Intro: *We live in a society that is dissatisfied with the home. We see groups trying to get rid of the father. We see movements to get rid of the mother. We see protests and rallies in favor of ending the lives of innocent children. Movies and TV shows feature unending drama and strife in the home. Our society subtly speaks to us — “if family life isn’t what you want, leave and start over - do whatever you need to do to be happy.” Perhaps the jaded view toward the home is because so many have never experienced the home as God intended. From a world of turmoil, chaos, noise, and sorrow, God created the home as a place of refuge.*

I. The home is a place of love.

- A. It is no surprise that our society struggles with this foundational component of the home — our society can’t figure out what love truly is.
 - 1. Love involves compassion — John 3.16
 - 2. Love involves dedication — Mark 12.30
 - 3. Love is demonstrated — Romans 5.8
 - 4. Love involves mercy — Ephesians 2.4
 - 5. Love is benevolent — 1 John 3.17
 - a) Benevolent = “marked by or disposed to doing **good**”
 - 6. Love is a reflection of the One Who loves us — 1 John 4.7
- B. Husbands are called to love their wives — Ephesians 5.25,28
- C. Wives are to love their husbands — Titus 2.4
- D. In that the home is a place of love:
 - 1. I will act compassionately toward the members of my home.
 - a) Compassion = “sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to alleviate it”
 - b) The concepts of selflessness, unity, and benevolence.
 - 2. I will be dedicated toward those in my home.
 - a) I’m not seeking fulfillment from people outside the home.
 - b) I pour all of myself into those of my family — I don’t hold back in my love for them. THIS CAN MAKE ME FEEL VULNERABLE. But the

blessing of the home is that, with this immense dedication toward one another, we are safe in opening ourselves up in such an environment.

3. My love won't simply be spoken — it will be affirmed through action.
 - a) A basic component of love is the demonstration thereof. As we noted earlier, it is not a responsibility that falls uniquely to one member of the family — rather, we all are commanded to love. Therefore, we are all called to demonstrate our love, not simply speak of it.
 - b) Particularly important in the husband/wife relationship. When we understand that love involves both demonstration and benevolence, here is what we see: my demonstration of my love toward my spouse is not necessarily in the sense that I need, but in the sense that my spouse needs. I may greatly appreciate it when my spouse cooks a certain meal, but if my spouse needs physical intimacy, then I need to orient myself toward that.
4. My home will be ruled by mercy.
 - a) I will listen carefully to what others have to say. I will try to understand them, Rather than immediately giving up or blowing up, I will patiently try to handle the matter.
 - b) The concept of communication is so fundamentally important. Paul would tell us that we don't know what someone is thinking unless they reveal it (1 Cor. 2.11). It is thus unfair (and unloving) to expect my spouse to be able to read my mind and immediately respond to me in whatever way I think is needful.
 - c) If I know my spouse loves me then I am going to be merciful and understand that they are trying to express that. I'm also going to talk honestly with them about what my needs actually are. And as a merciful and loving spouse, I'm going to listen carefully and adjust myself to the needs of my spouse.

II. The home is a place of respect.

- A. Just as our society has struggled with the idea of love, it has equally struggled with the concept of respect in the home. In modern depictions, respect is either the man dictatorially ruling his home with an iron fist or it

is a home where respect between the spouses is totally absent, with cut-downs and subtle insults popping out like kernels of popcorn in a microwaveable bag. This isn't what God intended and it ruins the peace and sanctity of the home.

1. Husbands are called to respect their wives — Eph. 5.28-29

- a) While the term “respect” is not used here, our concept of respect is certainly under consideration. The husband is to treat the wife in the same manner that he is to treat himself — he is to care for and nourish his wife.

2. Wives are called to respect their husbands — Eph. 5.33

- a) Though the term “respect” is used here, the word seems a bit more specialized in the Greek. It is referencing, in a specific way, the unique role of a wife which Paul earlier touched on in 5.22,24.
- b) It is appropriate to note that while the wife is in this unique position in the marriage relationship, all of us as Christians are called to experience a role of submission in one form or another (Eph. 5.20-21).
- c) However, within the marriage relationship, it falls upon the woman to be submissive to her husband. This is not a loss of personhood or significance, but is simply a unique role in which she can glorify God.

3. To make the home a place of respect:

- a) The husband must conduct himself in a manner that is worthy of respect.
 - (1) If he refuses to help her, if he refuses to help the children, if he refuses to listen to people, if he refuses to control his temper, if he refuses to create time for his family — these are all factors that contribute to a husband not being a man worthy of respect.
- b) The wife must be willing to occupy a role of submission.
 - (1) If she argues or dissents from every decision, if she refuses to talk, if she refuses to communicate, if she refuses reasonable requests, if she neglects the keeping of the home (which is a role specifically given to her by God — Titus 2.5) — these are all factors that contribute to the breakdown of respect in the home.

- c) To make the home a place of respect, I must be willing to give respect and I must be willing to live worthy of the respect of others.

III. The home is a place of nourishment.

- A. Because of the two previous points, and many other qualities, the home is uniquely situated to be a place of nourishment. The home is a place of respect and the home is a place of love — it is the perfect place, then, for the nourishment of the heart, mind, body, and spirit.
1. Husbands are to nourish and cherish their wives as themselves — Eph. 5.29
 2. Wives are to love, respect, and submit to their husbands — Titus 2.4-5
- B. From this point, the husband and wife can grow closer to one another in unity (Matthew 19.5)
- C. How can I make my home a place of nourishment:
1. I can love my spouse with the entirety of my being.
 2. I can talk to my spouse when something is bothering me.
 3. I can encourage my spouse to talk to me when something is bothering me.
 4. I can listen patiently when my spouse is talking to me.
 5. I can make my spouse a priority.
 6. I can be honest.

Closing: *A husband and father was noted by his wife and children for an odd mannerism after work. Before walking through the front door, the man would breath deeply, make a motion toward the wall, then put a smile on his face and walk through the door, greeting his family. For years the odd mannerism of making a motion toward the wall continued. Finally, his wife asked him — what is up with the mannerism. The husband explained that it was an exercise he did for himself everyday before he got home — he was hanging up all the negative baggage from his work day at the door. When he got home, he wanted to enjoy his family and he wanted his family to enjoy him. He was hanging his work problems on the invisible coat hanger outside the door.*

That is not to say that we should feel unwelcome to discuss our problems with our spouse, but it is to say that too often we bring much more home than we ought. We need to allow ourselves to leave those feelings of angst and frustration at the door and to allow our homes to be what God intended — a place of love, a place of respect, a place of nourishment — in every sense of the word, a refuge from the world.

But our homes will never truly be that until we submit our lives to the God who created the home and calls us to Himself through His Son, through whom we learn of true nourishment, respect, and love.