

The covenant of the house

The covenant of the house is built upon the foundation of a sound covenant of marriage. It is established at the point when a couple conceives their first child. At this point, God bestows the mandate of godly fatherhood and motherhood upon a husband and wife. These are the defining elements of the covenant of the house. Before a couple has children, the covenant of the house is *hidden in the marriage union*. Even so, when we meet and relate to a newlywed couple, or a couple without children, we are not visiting the secret of the marriage. Rather, the sum expression of their house is seen in the way they relate and interact with their community as a couple.

With the addition of children, the culture of a house becomes bigger than the culture of the marriage. This is for two reasons. Firstly, children add their unique identities to the nature of the household. Obviously, a household with four boys will be different from the household with one girl. The identities of those four boys will flavour the house differently to the household with one girl. However, one household with four boys will have a very different expression when compared to another household with four boys. This is due to the unique personality and identity of each child within a family. Secondly, the commendation to godly fatherhood and motherhood for a husband and wife will cause that couple to enter a new season of life together. The activities, allocation of time, and priority of responsibilities for a man and woman will change once they have children. In summary, when children are added to a household, the covenant of the house is no longer hidden within the covenant of the marriage. Instead, the covenant of marriage is now within the covenant of the house.

References:

Gen 18:19 1Ti 3:4
Psa 128:3 1Ti 5:14
Gal 1:15

Further Study:

Luke 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

Ordered in all things

When a couple makes covenant before the Lord by exchanging marriage vows, the Lord asks, ‘Where then is the house you could build for Me?’ Fathers and mothers have been given the dignity and privilege of participating in building God’s house. Children are given and entrusted to us by God. This is for the express purpose of nurturing them, both physically and spiritually, so that they are established in the culture of God’s house. A Christian household does not happen by accident. It is not by chance or good intentions that the culture of the Lord’s house defines the culture of our own house. Continual application is necessary and essential. The Lord promises, ‘To him who *orders his way* aright I shall show the salvation of God’.

King David testified of his house saying, ‘Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, *ordered in all things*, and secured; for all my salvation and all my desire, will He not indeed make it grow?’ The word ‘ordered’ means to ‘*arrange, set in order*’ or to ‘*draw up your battle lines*’. These definitions describe the necessity for *proactivity*. Elsewhere in the book of Psalms, we read, ‘To him who *orders his way* aright I shall show the salvation of God’. To order our houses aright will require regular examination of our culture. The word defines how we must order our way and our houses. A house ‘ordered in all things’ will be defined by the culture and lifestyle that’s commensurate with keeping the Everlasting Covenant of sonship. King David is testifying that by keeping covenant with God through obedience to the word, we can know security, peace and salvation for the members of our house.

References:

Psa 50:23 Isa 66:1
IKi 11:38 IPe 2:5
2Ch 27:6

Further Study:

2 Samuel 23

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

Following the Lord fully

In the book of Kings, we read of King Solomon whose ‘heart was *not wholly devoted* to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been’. Solomon pursued wives from nations concerning which the Lord had said, ‘You shall not associate with them ... for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods’. The Scriptures account that ‘Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and *did not follow the Lord fully*’. We read that ‘the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel who had appeared to him twice’. Despite the Lord appearing to Solomon twice, he nevertheless ‘went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites’. These verses contain a sobering warning for us. Having clearly known God, Solomon turned aside because he was not proactive and continual in his commitment to sanctifying his house.

Despite our participation in the church program, it is still possible *not* to follow the Lord ‘fully’. The word ‘fully’ can equally be translated ‘consecrate’ or ‘ordain’. The same Hebrew word is used in the book of Exodus to describe the ordination or ‘setting apart’ of Aaron and his sons to serve the Lord as priests. If the culture of our houses is not aligned with the culture of the altar in the Lord’s house, our priestly garments will be spotted by the defilements of the world. This means that we will have no authority to appear before the Lord to make offering and pray. Our offerings will not be received at the altar and our prayers will be hindered. We need to follow the Lord ‘fully’ so that our prayers are not hindered and we can receive grace for our households.

References:

1Ki 8:61 1Ki 15:3, 14
Deu 7:2-4 Pro 4:23
2Ti 4:10 2Pe 2:15

Further Study: 1 Kings 11

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 4

A panelled house

The Scriptures refer to a 'panelled' house. This is a house that is isolated from the defining culture and mandate of the Lord's house. The prophet Haggai rebuked the Lord's people for fostering alternate, disparate cultures in their panelled homes. He proclaimed, 'Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses while this house lies desolate? Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, "*Consider your ways!*"' The people needed to re-order their ways and their houses according to the sanctifying work of the altar. Finally, a panelled house is a context where we rationalise and excuse our unclean culture and behaviour. We do so believing that we're following the Lord fully. The word that is established in the fellowship of two or three is the only reference that will illuminate areas of our culture that are 'panelled'. There may be historic behaviours so ingrained in the culture of our homes that we are blinded to their incompatibility with the covenant of the kingdom. If we desire to follow the Lord *fully*, we cannot maintain a panelled house.

The Lord declared to Jeroboam, who became the ruler of the ten northern tribes, 'It will be, that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and *build you an enduring house* as I built for David'. This is a glorious promise that fills us with confidence and hope. By His grace, the Lord enables us to exercise obedience to His word. Then, as we re-order our houses aright, God meets and equips us with His power and capacity to build a faithful household. He helps us to build an enduring house.

References:

Mat 18:16 1Ki 11:38
Mat 24:45 Num 12:7
1Ch 17:24-27

Further Study: Haggai 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 5

The dignity of motherhood

The Scriptures teach that there is a clear and distinct mandate given to both fathers and mothers. We read in the book of Proverbs, 'Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching'. 'My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother.' The Scriptures give immense dignity to the role of motherhood. A wise husband will free his wife to stand in identity and accountability in this role. She is the centre, builder, guide and teacher of her house. The accountability for proclaiming the covenant of the house is firstly given to the woman. She is the expresser and articulator of the covenant of the house. When a woman accepts this responsibility, her children are blessed by her motherhood. A mother is multiplying the culture and covenant of her house in relation to her husband's headship. A mother has in her hand the opportunity to cause grace to abound in her family.

Godly motherhood is unique. It is the expression of motherhood specifically correlated to the *predestination* of her children. The nurturing of motherhood is part of the 'contract' of a child's salvation. In relation to the covenant of the house, the Lord often spoke with the woman alone. A husband who is properly connected to Christ as his own Head will not be threatened by this reality. There are multiple accounts in the Bible where the Lord spoke directly to mothers concerning the predestination of the child in their womb. Examples include Manoah's wife, Rebekah and Hagar. In the book of Acts, we read, 'Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there named Timothy. He was the *son of a believing Jewish woman*, but his father was a Greek.'

References:

Pro 1:8 Pro 6:20, 22
Pro 14:1 Jdg 13:2
Gen 25:22 Act 16:1
Luk 2:51

Further Study: Colossians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 6

The wise woman builds her house

How does a woman cultivate and multiply a godly culture? We read in the book of Proverbs, 'Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars'. This is the 'wise woman' who 'builds her house'. She has received her mandate to multiply the covenant of her house. She is bringing forth children for the purpose of establishing them in the culture of the household of God. The 'seven pillars' refer to the seven Spirits of God. Hence, a godly mother is a spiritual woman who has received the capacity of seven Spirits, by the Holy Spirit, for her work of motherhood.

The next verse of the same chapter of Proverbs continues, 'She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table'. A mother's initiative is to set the 'food' and 'wine' of the New Covenant at the heart of her house. This refers to the bread and wine of the communion meal. In fellowship with her husband, she is making the communion word substantial in her home as the source of life. If the word is filtered through her own law, or through her husband, she will be unable to guide and 'feed' her children. If she hears and receives the word, she is able to instruct her children in the way of understanding.

We will make an important practical comment here. Godly motherhood hinges on a woman receiving the word of present truth. For many mothers of young children, it can be difficult to establish a predictable routine that allows for regular devotional, prayer and study time. There is no single solution for mothers with young children. However, the charge to 'prepare her food and mix her wine' remains. The practicalities of this can be a point of fellowship with her husband and older spiritual mothers in the faith.

References:

Pro 9:1-2 Pro 14:1
Mal 2:15 Act 3:25
2Co 6:18 Psa 131:2

Further Study: 2 Timothy 1**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 9

The need for understanding

It is a noteworthy observation that couples, in general, do not receive preparatory counsel as they approach fatherhood and motherhood. In comparison, we could consider the vast amount of content and extensive hours of counsel a couple receive when they request help preparing for marriage. This program of counsel equips a couple with knowledge and understanding regarding something altogether new. The man has never been head to a woman, and the woman has never been helper to a man. She may have grown up submitted to her father's headship, but she was never fashioned by God as a 'comparable helper' to her father and his work. Becoming a father and mother is equally something new for each couple, but many couples have their first child without any scriptural understanding concerning fatherhood and motherhood. And in some situations, a couple's humility and willingness to hear and receive counsel during their preparation for marriage is not present as they approach parenthood.

The Scriptures go to significant lengths to help us understand the mandate of godly fatherhood and motherhood. For a man, his mandate as a father is an element of his submission to Christ as his Head. Likewise, for a woman, motherhood is not outside her submission to her husband as her head. Nevertheless, it extends her mandate beyond her role as a helper in her husband's work. She now possesses accountability before God, about which the Lord will speak to her heart directly. God speaks to the hearts of mothers concerning the covenant of their house and the predestination of their children. The starting point for understanding motherhood is that the mandate for godly motherhood is received from God. The Scriptures, the word proclaimed from week-to-week, and the ministry of present truth through our body ministry, provide an answer for every cultural and lifestyle difficulty we will encounter.

References:

Gen 2:21-23

1Co 11:3

Deu 33:8-9

Luk 8:21

Further Study:

Proverbs 31

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

What is the source of conflict?

The apostle James asked the question, 'What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? He then answered it by saying, 'Is it not your pleasures that wage war in your members?' The apostle Paul defined the source of the war waging in our members as the 'other law'. The other law is the mind set on the flesh. It is an independent mindset, the belief that we can do things our own way and achieve a good outcome. This is the mind set on the flesh. Unless we are receiving the word and being led by the Spirit, our parenting will fall into this model. While any man and woman can become a father and a mother, godly fatherhood and motherhood are delivered to us by the word. If we consider what the Scriptures teach concerning motherhood, the fruit will be confidence and a settled spirit in all areas of motherhood. Husbands and wives should be in discussion with one another concerning the micro matters of their house. We could ask ourselves, 'How often do we sit down as husband and wife, for no reason other than to reflect on our parenting?' We must continually orientate ourselves toward the mandate of raising our children in the 'fear and admonition of the Lord'.

A mother does not learn motherhood through cognition or the acceptance of certain principles. By 'acceptance', we mean the rationale a mother uses to decide whether or not to receive and implement parental advice. If cognition or acceptance were a mother's approach, how would she negotiate the barrage of worldly and even religious feminine advice? Rather, there is an 'in common' mandate for motherhood. This is learnt through a woman's responses in the body of Christ as she navigates through the circumstances of her life. This is how a woman will obtain testimony in the broadest of Christian terms.

References:

Jas 4:1

Rom 7:23

Eph 6:4

Rom 8:5-7

Deu 4:10

Further Study: Deuteronomy 31

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 11

Not anxious or fearful

The book of Proverbs describes the godly mother and centre of a house saying, 'She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet'. 'Scarlet', in this instance, refers to a 'double layer'. In other words, it is the preparatory measures required for protection during winter seasons. Against the onslaught of sickness, stress, particularly busy life programs, being a working parent, suffering for righteousness sake and so on, a godly mother should not have reason to fear or vacate her mandate. She is learning and trusting that there is provision in Christ for every season and situation in her own and her children's lives.

The Holy Spirit will be burning in the heart of a woman when peace is absent from her house. This is more than common parental frustration on a given day! The absence of peace will be a sense of unrest and unsettledness within a season, despite the ups and downs of day-to-day happenings. The absence of peace indicates that repentance and change are necessary. If a woman turns to the Lord, finds clarity concerning the nature of her repentance and the points of required change, grace can flow and peace can eventuate. Sanctification is the result, and a testimony of motherhood is obtained.

It is important a mother does not set her marriage covenant above the covenant of her house. When this is the case, the culture of her house will be 'panelled'. She will be self-preoccupied and unnecessarily anxious about her motherhood. This might be expressed by the attitude of a mother who says, 'I will only listen to my husband'. This type of approach will rob a woman of her dignity as a sister on the ground of the brethren. It will leave her locked up to the dysfunction of her house because she is unwilling to acknowledge the areas of culture that require change.

References:

Pro 31:21

Deu 30:9-10

Dan 3:16-17

1Co 7:32-34

Further Study: Philippians 4**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 12

Not comparative

A mother or father does not derive authority or a position of superiority over other parents because of the incremental development of their children. This is more likely to occur with first-time mothers or mothers of young children. Beliefs like, 'My child shares when they play with other children, therefore I must be a good mother' are a delusion. Mothers who feel 'qualified' on account of their child's successes will give themselves liberties to comment on other mothers, the validity of older spiritual mothers in the faith, and even the structure of the church program. In these situations, the basic culture of Christianity is no longer the foundation. Instead, it is one of empowerment based on comparison, and it will be difficult to meet house to house.

The apostle Paul was clear on this dynamic. He said, 'We are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves, but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding'. If a woman lacks understanding concerning godly motherhood, then she will be prone to either commend or disqualify herself on the basis of comparison. Comparison is the evidence of a mind set on the flesh and never leads to peace and security.

We observe a comparative dynamic in the relationship between Sarah and her maid Hagar. Sarah had borne no children for Abraham, and sought to obtain children through Hagar. When Hagar conceived, she began treating Sarah with contempt. Sarah was 'despised in her sight'. Hagar used her 'success' in becoming pregnant as grounds to usurp her mistress. In so doing, she went beyond her mandate as Sarah's maid and violated the lines of sanctification. Rather than appropriating her portion in the Lord by faith, she derived a false sense of power and control because of her unborn child.

References:

2Co 10:2 Gen 16:1-9
1Sam 1:6-8 1Co 4:6
Pro 27:2 Luk 18:11

Further Study:

2 Corinthians 10

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 13

Spiritual mothers

We recognise that a husband will not be the fountain of advice for many areas of motherhood. For example, fathers present during meetings with an obstetrician or mid-wife following the birth of a child, will quickly register that the medical staff are most interested in talking to the mother. They are discussing practical areas of motherhood and the covenant of the house! Paul highlighted the important role and contribution of older spiritual women. He noted that they are able to help younger women learn how to guide their homes. Paul wrote to Titus, 'Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behaviour, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may *encourage the young women* to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonoured'.

We note firstly that this admonition toward godly motherhood is for the honour of the word of God. Interestingly, we note Paul instructs older spiritual women to 'encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children'. There would scarcely be a mother who believes they need help loving their children, yet this is Paul's instruction. Despite a woman instinctively believing motherhood comes naturally, receiving input is the model. Most women will acknowledge that they don't have 'all the answers', but how readily they receive instruction concerning mothering can be a very different matter. How proactively they *seek out* instruction is a further question again. Older spiritual women must show wisdom in the way they teach younger mothers to fill out their role as the centre of the home. Care must be exercised not to overstep sound scriptural guidance.

References:

Tit 2:3-4

1Ti 2:11-12, 15

1Pe 3:5-6

Further Study: 1 Timothy 5

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 16

The point of temptation

When it comes to parenting, there are countless approaches, strategies and ideologies that are thrust upon us by the wisdom of the world. The apostle Paul warns that we who are spiritual must not be influenced by all these things. It is important to recognise that the major point of temptation arises at the transition between the covenant of marriage and the emergence of the covenant of the house. Satan targets our houses, using the enticements of worldly wisdom to beguile us and hijack our culture. We recall that this was the case for Eve. She turned to the strength of her flesh in her pursuit to fulfil her mandate to become the mother of mankind. She wanted to achieve God's purpose, but sought to do so by an alternate culture. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil presented a more attractive option to 'build her house', than obedience to God's word. She was enticed and deceived by worldly wisdom because Satan exploited her desire for multiplication. She was vulnerable at the 'break point' between the covenant of her marriage and the covenant of her house.

We possess a settled spirit at this landmark time when we take stock of the significance of our marriage vows. The covenant of marriage is the forsaking of all other covenants. If a husband or wife has not negotiated the foundation of their marriage covenant as the forsaking of all other covenants, then pressure and trouble will result in their house. Their house will be divided. This may take the shape of placing higher priority on career advancement and aspirations rather than the mandate of building a house for the Lord. Or it may be the inability to find grace in times of sickness, financial strain, and cultural adjustment. It may also be manifest in a lack of clarity concerning the role of extended family.

References:

Mar 3:24-25
Rom 15:1
Gal 6:1
1Co 3:19
Gen 2:24

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 1**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 17

Extended family

The Scriptures teach that the extension of a family is included within the covenant of a house. They are referred to as 'every tribe' and 'every family'. The psalmist writes, 'The Lord bless you from Zion, and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. Indeed, may you see *your children's children*. Peace be upon Israel!' Elsewhere in the book of Proverbs, we read, 'Children's children are the crown of old men'. We can summarise this way. Grandchildren are part of the house of their grandparents, but grandparents are not the father or mother of their grandchildren. Headship gives a dimension to a nuclear family that defines its house-to-house alignment within the relationship of an extended family. Blessing can result for extended families that understand the lines of sanctification.

In his second letter to Timothy, who was a believer on account of his mother's faith, Paul remarked, 'I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in *your grandmother* Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well'. The blessing to a family is that sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters become sons of God. The viability of extended houses will only endure whilst the sanctity of the marriage covenant is maintained. That is, if the grandparents are visiting their children's houses, they are not visiting their marriage. The intrusion or inordinate invitation for input from grandparents confuses the lines of relationship that belong to the nuclear family. Through marriage, a couple leave their father and mother's house to establish a new house. Finally, the hope is that clarity concerning this 'leaving' avails a freedom and ease house to house. In a relaxed fellowship between a couple and their parents or parents-in-law, discussion can include the culture of their respective houses.

References:

Rev 5:9 Zec 12:12-14
 Psa 128:5-6 Pro 17:6
 2Ti 1:5 Gen 2:24

Further Study:

Genesis 50

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 18

Every house is built by someone

In an interesting verse to the Hebrews, the writer reminds us, 'Every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God'. God holds us accountable for the sanctification of our houses. This is because no house builds itself! The culture of our houses should reflect the covenant of the house that God makes with every family. To understand the sanctifying work of the Father, we will briefly consider the 'circumcision of Christ'.

The fundamental work of the Father is to reveal every son of God in the glory of their predestined name. The Father does this by 'circumcision'. As Jesus suffered and travailed from Gethsemane to Calvary, He was experiencing the circumcising work of the Father. This is the circumcision of the new heart. When we are born again, our 'heart of stone' is removed and we receive a new 'heart of flesh'. Jesus describes this new heart as 'good ground', because it is able to receive and nurture the seed of divine nature. Paul spoke of the 'circumcision of the heart' in his letter to the Romans. All who have received a new heart may participate in the circumcision of Christ. Paul wrote to the Colossians, saying, 'In Him *you were also circumcised* with a circumcision made without hands'.

As we join the circumcision of Christ, we join the process of suffering and discipline that is conforming us to our sonship. The Father is conforming us to our name as a son of God in the kingdom, and we obtain testimony. We are receiving our full inheritance as a son. And at the same time, we are being conformed and sanctified to the image God has planned for our marriage and for our house in the kingdom.

References:

Heb 3:4 Eze 11:19
Luk 8:15 Col 2:11
Zec 4:9

Further Study: Romans 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 19

Sanctification is the foundation

The prophet Malachi, and Jesus Himself, connected the sanctification of our hearts to the covenants of marriage and the house. Malachi proclaimed to God's people that they had dealt treacherously with their wives in the matter of divorce. He then proclaimed, 'But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit'. When our hearts are sanctified, we are able to remain one spirit before the Lord. Jesus revealed that hardness of heart in the people provoked Moses to permit divorce. But He said, 'From the beginning it has not been this way'.

From the beginning, the Lord has required a man and woman to be sanctified to their *predestined* name and works. These have been proclaimed in the covenant 'before'. To set ourselves apart to any other definition is to become defiled, unclean and, finally, profane. If a husband seeks to shape his wife according to his own self-centred agenda, he wars against her onus to fulfil her mandate and express her identity. Instead, marriage should be the context for the full free expression of a man and a woman, a husband and wife, and father and mother.

Sanctification is the foundation for true romance. Romance can be defined as a man and woman meeting and appreciating one another on the basis of identity. They have no motivation to conquer the other. This is significantly different from selfish worldly romance where affection is given in return for some realised desire. Worldly romance is almost always locked in a trading mechanism. When a couple understand and honour who God has made the other to be, they encourage one another to be that person. Certain characteristics are indicators that a marriage or household is under bondage and, therefore, un sanctified. These may include fear, jealousy, paranoia, control, bargaining or seduction.

References:

Mal 2:14-15 Mat 19:8
1Th 4:4-7 2Ti 2:21
Heb 12:14

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 6

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 20

Sanctification for a man

In this present season, we have been reconsidering the meaning of 'headship'. Headship is the relational order whereby the life and power of God flows to every household and to the church. It is the initiative of God to establish an order of authority necessary to overcome and conquer ungodliness. It is the means of joining households to the fellowship of new creation life. A man can only be effective in his headship, as both a husband and father, if he can separate himself from any agendas that his wife or household have. For example, a man preoccupied with pleasing his wife or placating his children will be compromised in his capacity as a head. He must give himself to the Lord and find his only reference in *his* Head, Jesus Christ. We are not saying that a man should not fellowship with his wife and discuss their journey ahead together. To not do so would be foolish. He would deny himself the insight of godly womanhood and motherhood. Indeed, true godly wisdom is needed. Headship, therefore, describes a man's accountability before Christ to cause grace to flow to his family.

Jesus separated Himself from His disciples so that He could pioneer a way for them to be sanctified. He said to them, 'Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow *later*'. To prepare a pathway of sanctification for His disciples, Jesus had to firstly give Himself to the circumcising work of the Father. He testified, 'For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves may be sanctified in truth'. In the same way, a husband and father must give himself to Christ as his Head, subject himself under His hand, and thus find his own sanctification. When he offers himself in this way, he can establish a pathway forward to godliness for his household.

References:

1Co 11:4 Joh 13:36
Joh 17:19 Pro 7:21-27
Col 2:11

Further Study: Ecclesiastes 7

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 23

Sanctified by the altar

A woman will only be effective in her mandate when she recognises that she is a sister on the ground of the brethren. This relationship must be established before she becomes a wife and mother. Long before she was a helper to her husband and a mother to her children, she was a sister. This is a significant point because it highlights the source of confusion between the culture of the kingdom and any other culture that can exist in our homes. Most of the angst experienced by a woman and her household can be attributed to placing higher priority on the covenants of marriage and the house, than on the covenant of the kingdom. This leads to alternate cultures and agendas being accommodated in the home. These are then thrust upon the fellowship of the church. This is offering in uncleanness that defiles the Lord's house. This denies the altar that sanctifies our offering.

Let us consider a simple example. Our ethos for dress at church functions should show respect for the occasion. If a woman dresses in inappropriate clothing, this is not firstly an issue to do with the culture of the kingdom. The question should be, what allowances and accommodations are being made in the covenant of the house in which she lives, that give credence to clothing that *denies* the covenant of the kingdom? The problem lies in the covenant of her marriage and covenant of her house. The hope would be that she perceives the merits of modesty. She recognises that the Lord desires her to guard her sanctification and pursue the inner beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. With illumination on the culture of the kingdom, the covenant of her house will be amended. This is only one example. All areas of our culture are to be sanctified by the altar.

References:

Mat 23:19, 26

Exo 29:37

1Pe 3:1-6

Psa 51:6

Rom 2:29

Further Study:

Genesis 12

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

Sanctification for a woman

A husband sanctifies his wife by calling her to the word of her name and works. This includes her sisterhood and motherhood. In this way, a woman is sanctified to her identity and motherhood by the washing of the water with the word. This has an expression in the house as a husband and wife fellowship together in all situations. In practical terms, the day-to-day activities and circumstances of life provide a relaxed, humble opportunity to apply the word of present truth to the culture and dynamics of a household. It is interesting to note that Eve's eyes were not opened to see her nakedness when she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam still had a choice. Instead of disobeying the word of God to him, Adam could have sanctified Eve by calling her back to her mandate. Even though Eve had fallen, if Adam had obeyed God, their children could have been born as sons of God. Both husband and wife must receive the word preached directly to their hearts. This is the word to which a husband calls his wife.

A woman can sanctify her home when she stands in her role and place as a sister, wife and mother. This is an absolute reality whether or not her husband is present, or is a Christian. The apostle Paul taught, 'A woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife. And the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.' The house can be a place of peace. Through faithful motherhood, children can be settled, kept in the way of the Lord, and delivered to the ground of the brethren in sanctification and honour.

References:

Eph 5:25-26

Gen 3:6-7

1Co 7:13-14

2Co 11:3

Further Study: 1 Timothy 2**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 25

The work of the Holy Spirit

We will know when something is not as it should be in our marriage or house. The Holy Spirit burns upon us and convicts us regarding the absence of peace. This is the first action of the Holy Spirit concerning sanctification. This is the mercy and grace of God toward us. The second action of the Holy Spirit is to provoke us to seek fellowship with the word of a messenger. Even though we recognise the absence of peace in our marriage or house, we do not always have clarity concerning the issues warring against peace. As we receive and obey the word, peace reigns in our hearts because we understand our particular circumstances in life. There will be an answer to all our questions and discussions. Jesus has promised us, ‘When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.’

The person with a hard heart of stone will seek the word as a resource to strengthen an agenda they already have. They will often pursue hours of counsel as they aim to alleviate the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Rather than accepting that repentance and change are necessary, they look for a word they can construe as approval to continue their disobedience. They want the messenger to entertain their idol. In contrast to this, when a person receives a new heart, the Holy Spirit pours the love of God into that honest and good heart. To be filled with the love of God is to be motivated by the love with which God Himself loves. A Christian is able to connect with the word of present truth by faith. They will receive the word with joy and bring forth the fruit of life through their obedience. Peace is found in obeying the word.

References:

Joh 16:13 Eze 14:4, 9-10
 Luk 8:15 Rom 8:6
 Rom 14:17 Eph 4:3

Further Study:

Galatians 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 26

The danger of complacency

The prophet Isaiah spoke of God's judgements upon those who are at ease and, therefore, complacent. We will observe how this prophecy applies to women and mothers who feel their desires have been satisfied. They believe they have control of their lives and their houses. Isaiah called them to 'rise up' saying, 'You will be troubled, O complacent daughters'. He said that 'thorns and briars' would come up in the land, and it would become the delight of 'wild donkeys'. The Lord is speaking to women who are complacent because, over time, their unwillingness to take heed to the word will result in fruit that is worthless.

The house of the complacent woman will bring forth thorns and briars. Jesus describes the thorns that choke the fruit of the word as the cares of the world. The thorns and briars represent their children who are reactive and prickly. Ishmael, the son of Hagar, was prophetically described as a 'wild donkey of a man, whose hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand will be against him'. If women are at ease in their ways, their children will grow up obstinate, without discipline, and difficult to instruct. The word calls every woman to repent and mourn for their ease and the fruit that is revealed in their children.

The promise of the Spirit is that our homes can bear fruit unto righteousness. The word proclaimed to us by a messenger administration is Spirit and life. When women walk according to the mandate of godly motherhood, their homes and children live in the peace of God. These children will grow with the capacity and confidence to fulfil the works of righteousness. As women are led by the Spirit, they can overcome fear and terror in their homes. Houses, mothers and children will be secure and safe.

References:

Mar 4:19 Isa 47:7-8
Gen 16:12 Jer 48:11-12
Joh 6:63 Pro 31:27-28

Further Study:

Isaiah 32

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 27