



FootPrint 16 — FAMILY GOVERNMENT AND ITS RELATION TO THE CHURCH

The family and family government and its relationship to the church and leadership is unmistakable. When reviewing this, refer back to FootPrint 9 and “The Role of Leadership – Qualifications to see all the matters related to the family.

This church recognizes, acknowledges, and honors God as our Father (Jesus to be after sin is destroyed and He takes His own throne – **Isaiah 9:6**), the Bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem, as our mother (**Galatians 4:26; Revelation 21:2, 9-10**), and all of us as believers as His adopted children. We are all brethren, and heirs according to the promise. **Romans 8:14-17**. The family on earth is representative of the family in heaven and must be conducted as such.

CREATION AND MARRIAGE

The family was firmly established by God at creation. He created the man first, then the woman. He then instituted the rite of marriage. Marriage is God’s institution, not man’s. Marriage under God’s plan is *always* to be between a man and a woman. He then told them, even before sin entered the picture, to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. **Genesis 1:28**. The man is representative of God the Father. That is why he was given authority and dominion, even over the woman, though, because she was taken and formed from his rib, is to be treated as an equal, not a slave or piece of property.

“God Himself instituted marriage in the beginning. When God made man, He made him male and female, and gave them dominion, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and subdue and fill the earth’. **Genesis 1:28**. This was even before the

Sabbath was given. On the sixth day, God created man, the last of all His works. The animals were all brought before him for him to name, but among them he found no help that was meet (suitable) for him. There was none that could be a companion for him. So God took from his side a rib, which He built into a woman, and brought to him, and, recognizing his counterpart, Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.' **Genesis 2:23, 24.**

"It was after the union of the man and the woman had been blessed by God, and the command to be fruitful had been given, that "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." **Genesis 1:31.** Then came the Sabbath, the seventh day, which God blessed for man's good. These two institutions, marriage and the Sabbath, come from Eden, and belong to Eden. In marriage, even as in the Sabbath, we have that which, rightly understood, brings us closer to God in His working than anything else.

"True marriage brings men into close connection with the Lord, making them partners with Him in His work. In it we have the revelation of the mystery of Christ in His union with the church. The Apostle Paul, after quoting the words found in the second chapter of Genesis, "They shall be one flesh," adds, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." And he says that husbands should love their wives, as Christ also loved the church, and that the husband should nourish and cherish the wife even as the Lord the church. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." **Ephesians 5:22, 23.** Marriage is designed to teach us of Christ's saving union with us; but the institution has been so perverted, that as a general thing it is not a true revelation of Christ. We must learn first from Christ what marriage ought to be, and then it in turn will reveal to us more of the Lord than we could know without it." **E. J. Waggoner, Present Truth, UK June 6, 1901**

IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND FAMILY GOVERNMENT IN GOD'S EYES

This is God's order and God's arrangement. The family unit is the most important entity in existence. Its destruction by social mores and cultural trends and the loss of the truth and poor leadership in and by the professed church has led to what we are seeing today in the total breakdown of morals in society. The violence, the use of stimulants, the reliance upon drugs for survival, whether legal or otherwise, the turning of the natural to the unnatural in order to gain some

degree of peace or happiness, even on a temporary basis is because the family, as God created it and intended for it to be, is no more on a general basis. The husband has been rendered obsolete or of no value by his constant portrayal on television and movies as weak, effeminate, indecisive, etc. The mother, desiring "equality" and being in every way equal to a man, now works for her independence from man, or out of need to help maintain the family finances and live in the "middle class" to be accepted amongst peers. No time for children, who are left to the schools, whose education system is an utter failure in every regard because its basis is one of doubt, thus causing the children to have no confidence in parents, teachers, or anyone in any position of leadership or authority, especially God.

"In the *North American Review* for April, 1900, there was published an article entitled "The Scientific Method in Theology," written by a professor of philosophy in Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.; who was educated at Amherst and Yale; spent two years in philosophical study in Germany; and from 1883 to 1885 was instructor of philosophy in Wesleyan University. Thus, every circumstance of the article is a pledge that it is authoritative as to the scientific method in theology, and in that article it is said:—

"Every man, because he is a man, is endowed with powers for forming judgments, and he is placed in this world to develop and apply those powers to all objects with which he comes in contact. In *every sphere of investigation*, he should *begin with DOUBT*, and the student will make *the most rapid progress* who has acquired the *art of doubting well*. . . . We ask that every student of theology take up the subject precisely as he would any other science: that he *begin with DOUBT*."

And now, with the breakdown of the family unit, beginning with the marriage itself, most ending up in divorce, broken families make things even worse. Women having children without even knowing for sure who the father is (as shown daily on TV shows such as "The Maury Show"), fathers up and leaving everything for whatever reason they can come up with, the list is endless. And now people attempting to create the concept of "family" with two mothers or two fathers is the latest trend because the true family has been lost, for the most part.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS TO CHILDREN REQUIRED BY GOD AND ITS RELATION TO THE CHURCH

"God designs that the family of earth shall be a symbol of the family in heaven, Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God's plan, are among His most effective agencies for the formation of Christian

character and for the advancement of His work." **E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 430.**

"I have been shown that parents generally have not taken a proper course with their children. They are not restrained as they should be. They are left to indulge in pride, and follow their own inclinations. Anciently parental authority was regarded, and children were in subjection to their parents. They feared and revered them; but the order in these last days is reversed. Some parents are in subjection to their children. They fear their children, and yield to them. They fear to cross the will of their children; but just as long as children are under the roof of their parents, dependent upon them, they should be subject to them. Parents should move with decision, requiring the following out of their views of right.

"Eli might have restrained his wicked sons, but he feared their displeasure. He suffered them to go on in their rebellion, until they were a curse to Israel. Parents are required to restrain their children. The salvation of children depends very much upon the course pursued by their parents. In their mistaken love and fondness for their children, they indulge them to their hurt, nourish their pride, and put upon them trimmings and fixings which make them vain, and lead them to think that dress makes the lady or gentleman. But a short acquaintance convinces those with whom they associate that an outside appearance is not sufficient to hide the deformity of a heart void of the Christian graces, but filled with self-love, haughtiness, and uncontrolled passion. Those who love meekness, humility, and virtue, should shun such society, even if it be Sabbath-keepers' children. Their company is poisonous, their influence leads to death. Parents realize not the destructive influence of the seed which they are sowing. It will spring up and bear fruit which will make their children despise parental authority.

"Children, even after they are of age, are required to respect, and look after the comforts of their parents. They should listen to the counsel of godly parents, and not feel because a few years are added to their life, that they have grown out of their duty to them. There is a commandment with promise to those who honor their father and their mother.

"Children in these last days are so noted for their disobedience and disrespect, that God has especially noticed it, and it constitutes a sign that the end is near. It shows the power of Satan upon minds, and the almost complete control he has of the minds of the young. By many, age is no more respected. It is considered too old-fashioned to respect the aged, for it dates back as far as the days of Abraham. Says God, 'I know him, that he will command his children and household after him.' **Genesis 18:19.** Anciently, children were not permitted

to marry without the consent of their parents. Parents chose for their children. It was considered a crime for children to contract marriage upon their own responsibility. The matter was first laid before the parents, and they were to consider whether the person to be brought into a close relation to them was worthy, and whether the parties could provide for a family. It was considered by them of the greatest importance that they, the worshipers of the true God, should not intermarry with an idolatrous people, lest they lead their families away from God.

“Even after their children were married, the most solemn obligation rested upon them. Their judgment then was not considered sufficient without the counsel of their parents, and they were required to respect and obey their wishes, unless they should conflict with their duty to God.

“Again I was directed to the condition of children in these last days. Children are not controlled. Parents should commence their first lesson of discipline when their children are babes in their arms. Teach them to yield their will to yours. This can be done by bearing an even hand, and manifesting firmness. Parents should have perfect control over their own spirits, and with mildness, and yet firmness, bend the will of the child until it shall expect nothing else but to yield to their wishes.

“Parents do not commence in season. The first manifestation of temper is not subdued, and the children grow stubborn, which increases with their growth, and strengthens with their strength. Some children, as they grow older, think it a matter of course that they must have their own way, and that their parents must submit to their wishes. They expect their parents to wait upon them. They are impatient of restraint, and when old enough to be a help to their parents, they do not bear the burdens they should. They have been released from responsibilities, and grow up worthless at home, and worthless abroad. They have no power of endurance; the parents have borne the burden, and have suffered them to grow up in idleness, without habits of order, industry, and economy. They have not been taught habits of self-denial, but have been petted and indulged, their appetites gratified, and they come up with enfeebled health. Their manners and deportment are not agreeable. They are unhappy themselves, and make those around them unhappy. And when the children are but children still, and while they need to be disciplined, they are allowed to go out in company, mingle with the society of the young, and one has a corrupting influence over the other.

“The curse of God will surely rest upon unfaithful parents. Not only are they planting thorns which shall wound them here, but they must meet their own unfaithfulness when the judgment shall sit. Many children will rise up in

judgment and condemn their parents for not restraining them, and charge upon them their destruction. The false sympathy and blind love of parents, causes them to excuse the faults of their children, and to pass them by without correction, and their children are lost in consequence, and the blood of their souls will rest upon unfaithful parents.

“Children, who are thus brought up undisciplined, when they profess to be Christ's followers, have everything to learn. Their whole religious experience is effected by their bringing up in childhood. The same self-will often appears; the same lack of self-denial; the same impatience manifest under reproof; the same love of self, and unwillingness to seek counsel of others, or to be influenced by others' judgment; the same indolence, shunning of burdens, lack of bearing responsibilities, is seen in their relation to the church. It is possible for such to overcome, but how hard the battle! how severe the conflict! How hard to pass through a course of thorough discipline, which is necessary for them to reach the elevation of Christian character. Yet if they overcome at last, they will be permitted to see before they are translated how near the precipice of eternal destruction they came, caused by the lack of right training in youth, and by not learning submission in childhood.” **E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 4b, pp. 48-51; Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, pp 216-220.***

“God condemns the negligence that dallies with sin and crime, and the insensibility that is slow to detect its baleful presence in the families of professed Christians. He holds parents accountable in a great degree for the faults and follies of their offspring. God visited with His curse not only the sons of Eli, but Eli himself, and this fearful example should be a warning to the parents of this time.

“As I looked upon the perilous situation of our youth, and was shown how indifferent the parents are to their welfare, my heart was sick and faint; angels were troubled and wept with grief. The youth are passing into the world, and into the hands of Satan. They are becoming less susceptible to the sweet influences of the grace of God, bolder and more defiant, and manifest increasing disregard of eternal interests. I saw Satan planting his banner in the households of those who profess to be God's chosen ones, but those who are walking in the light should be able to discern the difference between the black banner of the adversary and the bloodstained standard of Christ.

“Children should be taught by precept and example. Parents should meet their grave responsibilities with fear and trembling. Fervent prayers should be offered for divine strength and guidance in this task. In many families the seeds of vanity and selfishness are sown in the hearts of the children almost during babyhood. Their cunning little sayings and doings are commented upon and

praised in their presence, and repeated with exaggerations to others. The little ones take note of this and swell with self-importance; they presume to interrupt conversations, and become forward and impudent. Flattery and indulgence foster their vanity and willfulness, until the youngest not unfrequently rules the whole family, father and mother included.

“Parents frequently pet and indulge their young children because it appears easier to manage them in that way. It is smoother work to let them have their own way than to check the unruly inclinations that rise so strongly in their breasts. Yet this course is cowardly. It is a wicked thing thus to shirk responsibility; for the time will come when these children, whose unchecked inclinations have strengthened into absolute vices, will bring reproach and disgrace upon themselves and their families. They go out into busy life unprepared for its temptations, not strong enough to endure perplexities and troubles; passionate, overbearing, undisciplined, they seek to bend others to their will, and, failing in this, consider themselves ill-used by the world and turn against it. **E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, pp 200-201**

“My brethren, are you cultivating devotion? Is love of religious things prominent? Are you living by faith and overcoming the world? Do you attend the public worship of God? and are your voices heard in the prayer and social meeting? Is the family altar established? Do you gather your children together morning and evening, and present their cases to God? Do you instruct them how to become followers of the Lamb? Your families, if irreligious, testify to your neglect and unfaithfulness. If, while you are connected with the sacred cause of God, your children are careless, irreverent, and have no love for religious meetings or sacred truth, it is a sad thing. Such a family exerts an influence against Christ and against the truth; and "he that is not with Me is against Me," says Christ. The neglect of home religion, the neglect to train your children, is most displeasing to God. If one of your children were in the river, battling with the waves and in imminent danger of drowning, what a stir there would be! What efforts would be made, what prayers offered, what enthusiasm manifested, to save the human life! But here are your children out of Christ, their souls unsaved. Perhaps they are even rude and uncourteous, a reproach to the Adventist name. They are perishing without hope and without God in the world, and you are careless and unconcerned.

“What example do you give your children? What order do you have at home? Your children should be educated to be kind, thoughtful of others, gentle, easy to be entreated, and, above everything else, to respect religious things and feel the importance of the claims of God. They should be taught to respect the hour

of prayer; they should be required to rise in the morning so as to be present at family worship.

“Fathers and mothers who make God first in their households, who teach their children that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, glorify God before angels and before men by presenting to the world a well-ordered, well-disciplined family, a family that love and obey God instead of rebelling against Him. Christ is not a stranger in their homes; His name is a household name, revered and glorified. Angels delight in a home where God reigns supreme, and the children are taught to reverence religion, the Bible, and their Creator. Such families can claim the promise: "Them that honor Me I will honor." As from such a home the father goes forth to his daily duties, it is with a spirit softened and subdued by converse with God. He is a Christian, not only in his profession, but in trade, in all his business relations. He does his work with fidelity, knowing that the eye of God is upon him.

“In the church his voice is not silent. He has words of gratitude and encouragement to utter; for he is a growing Christian, with a fresh experience every day. He is a helpful, active worker in the church, laboring for the glory of God and the salvation of his fellow men. He would feel condemned and guilty before God were he to neglect to attend public worship, thus failing to improve the privileges that would enable him to do better and more effective service in the cause of truth.

“God is not glorified when influential men make themselves mere businessmen, ignoring their eternal interests, that are so much more enduring, so much more noble and elevated, than the temporal. Where should the greatest tact and skill be exercised, if not upon those things that are imperishable, as enduring as eternity? Brethren, develop your talent in the direction of serving the Lord; manifest as much tact and ability in working for the upbuilding of the cause of Christ as you do in worldly enterprises. {5T 425.2}

“There is, I am sorry to say, a great want of earnestness and interest in spiritual things on the part of the heads of many families. There are some who are seldom found in the house of worship. They make one excuse, then another, and still another, for their absence; but the real reason is that their hearts are not religiously inclined. A spirit of devotion is not cultivated in the family. The children are not brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. These men are not what God would have them. They have no living connection with Him; they are purely businessmen. They have not a conciliatory spirit; there is such a lack of meekness, kindness, and courtesy in their deportment that their motives are misconstrued, and the good they really do possess is evil spoken of.

If they could realize how offensive their course is in the sight of God, they would make a change. **E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, pp 423-425**