

Family Life of Jonathan Edwards – Part 2

[10 attributes – continued]

3. Their marriage was characterized by intense mutual affection and respect. Most people who met the family saw Sarah as busily managing the house and doing a lot of the work, but a biographer of Edwards wrote:

Sarah depended on Edwards for her own spiritual replenishment. She would dart into his study during the day, confident that no matter how intent he was on his writing, he would put down his pen and turn to her with lighted face.

Application: Men, let us imitate Jonathan Edwards in this way with our wives, children, friends, and everyone else.

Sarah's transactions with her children were reinforced because her husband treated her with total courtesy and serenely expected that each child would follow *his example*.

Point: The way married people treat each other, has in itself *a discipling impact upon those who see it* – not just children, but anyone watching.

There are many books on marriage, but none are worth the jewels contained in just this one key passage of Scripture:

Ephesians 5:22-33 [22] Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. [24] Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

- This is one reason it is so critical to teach Biblical principles with regard to marriage to our children - regardless of gender. Our daughters will be required to *submit* to their own husbands - "*as to the Lord.*" There is an authority structure in the home - the husband is the head of the wife the text says.

[25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, [26] that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, [27] that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

- While we often hear a heavy emphasis upon the husband being the head of his wife, we often forget that while the wife is to submit to her husband, *he is called to lay his life down for her - and to love her just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.*
- Dare any married men ask how their love for their wife compares to Jesus' love for His church? *What an incredible statement is this?*
- Here again we see so clearly the Biblical principle that Christians must marry other believers. How can a non-Christian man love a woman "as Christ loved the church?" Notice what follows in the coming verses....

[28] So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

- Here is a remarkable statement we must take to heart - “he who loves his wife, loves himself.” No other relationship in a man’s life is described this way. We are called upon to love others, to love our children, to honor our father and mother. But it is only in marriage that you have this incredible statement - When you love your wife, you are loving *yourself*.
- This is because of the one-flesh union God creates in the marriage bond... but the text explains this more later.

[29] For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

- Paul pushes the analogy a bit farther - men whose minds are sounds do not wake up and think of ways to abuse their own bodies. No, we get up and usually eat something, drink something, bathe, etc. Paul is saying that the marriage union is so intimate that when a husband is loving and caring for and nourishing his wife, he is loving someone who is so much a part of who he now is *because of God making the two one*, that he is in effect loving *himself*.

[30] For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

- Christ is the bridegroom and we, all of Christ’s sheep, Christ’s church, are the bride. There is a correspondence between the union of husband and wife and that of Christ and the church.

[31] "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." [32] This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. [33] Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

- Husbands, we must love our wives - and do everything we can to study them and love them in the way that makes them feel the most loved.

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them **with understanding**, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

- This is a calling to “study” your wife. Dwell with your wife *with understanding* - figure out how to love her in a way that draws out her gifts and makes her thrive.
- Wives, see that you respect your husband. Men crave respect and admiration. Don’t belittle or beat him down. Encourage, build up, and pray for that man.

Jonathan and Sarah Edwards did these things very well - and their guests and friends could see it. **Their marriage was characterized by intense mutual affection and respect.**

4. Family worship was central to family life – their work of studying Scripture together, praying together, and singing together was the cornerstone.

Jan, 1728, “I think Christ has recommended rising early in the morning by rising from the dead early in the morning.” And thus, all the children (10 of them at one point) were gotten out of bed before dawn and had a chapter read to them from Scripture – yes, even on the cold winter mornings – even by candle-light.

“The surge and the thunder of the King James Bible twice a day in the sound of their father’s voice became part of the children’s earliest memories.” **Application:** Never underestimate the power of reading Scripture to your family. **Turn to Proverbs 2:1, then 3:1, then 4:1ff...**

Illustration: I heard a story of a man whose father was a pastor who had this practice in their home. He would read to them the Bible every day. And he said, “at the time I didn’t appreciate it... I wanted to play and do other things. But now, when I hear the Bible read aloud I hear it in my father’s voice.”

In 1874, long after Jonathan and Sarah were gone, there was a reunion of their descendents. And a story was related from a local physician who had participated from time to time in Edwards’ family prayers. And he said he “had never heard a prayer that brought heaven and earth together.” A man whose heart is on fire for Christ **is what the world needs more than anything.**

5. Honor and obedience were secured from the children:

Ephesians 6:1-4 [1] Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [2] *“Honor your father and mother,”* which is the first commandment with promise: [3] *“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”* [4] And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Samuel Hopkins, a young pastor who spent time living with the Edwards family, said this about Sarah’s demeanor with her 10 children:

“She had an excellent way of governing her children. She knew how to make them regard and obey her cheerfully without loud angry words, much less heavy blows. She seldom punished them. And in speaking to them used gentle and pleasant words. If any correction was necessary, she did not administer it in a passion. When she had occasion to reprove and rebuke, she would do it with a few words without warmth [i.e. anger] and noise. In her directions in matters of importance she would address herself to the reason of her children that they might not only know her will, but at the same time be convinced of the reasonableness of it. She had need to speak but once. She was cheerfully obeyed. Murmuring and answering again were not known among them. In their manners, they were uncommonly respectful to their parents. When their parents came into the room, they all rose instinctively from their seats and never resumed them until they were seated. And when either parent was speaking, they were all immediately silent and attentive. The kind and gentle treatment they received from their mother while she strictly and punctiliously maintained her parental authority seemed naturally to promote a filial respect and affection, and to lead them to a mild, tender treatment of each other. Quarrelling and contention which too frequently take place among children, were in her family unknown. She carefully observes the first appearance of resentment and ill will in her young children towards any person whatever and did not connive at it, but was careful to show her displeasure and suppress it to the utmost, yet not using angry,

wrathful words which often provoke children to wrath. Her system of discipline was begun at a very early age. And it was her rule to resist the first as well as every subsequent exhibition of temper or disobedience in the child, wisely reflected that until a child will obey his parents, he can never be brought to obey God."

And now another run through the Proverbs. The Discipline of Children by Parents and Proper Attitude of Children to Parents – From Proverbs. After we walk through these many passages, I think we will see clearly what Scripture says when it calls us to "talk" of the things of God's Word "when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up." These things were exemplified in the Edwards home between Jonathan and Sarah and their children:

Proverbs 1:8 [8] My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; [9] For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck.

Proverbs 3:1-4 [1] My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; [2] For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you. [3] Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, [4] *And so find favor and high esteem* In the sight of God and man.

Proverbs 3:11-12 [11] My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction; [12] For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights.

Proverbs 4:1-9 [1] Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; [2] For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law. [3] When I was my father's son, Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, [4] He also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live. [5] Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. [6] Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. [7] Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *Therefore* get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. [8] Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. [9] She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you."

Proverbs 13:24 [24] He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.

Proverbs 15:5 [5] A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent.

Proverbs 15:20 [20] A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother.

Proverbs 17:6 [6] Children's children *are* the crown of old men, And the glory of children *is* their father.

Proverbs 17:21 [21] He who begets a scoffer *does so* to his sorrow, And the father of a fool has no joy.

Proverbs 17:25 [25] A foolish son *is* a grief to his father, And bitterness to her who bore him.

Proverbs 19:13a [13] A foolish son *is* the ruin of his father,...

Proverbs 19:18 [18] Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.

Proverbs 19:26 [26] He who mistreats *his* father *and* chases away *his* mother *is* a son who causes shame and brings reproach.

Proverbs 20:7 [7] The righteous *man* walks in his integrity; His children *are* blessed after him.

Proverbs 20:11 [11] Even a child is known by his deeds, Whether what he does *is* pure and right.

Proverbs 20:20 [20] Whoever curses his father or his mother, His lamp will be put out in deep darkness.

Proverbs 22:15 [15] Foolishness *is* bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Proverbs 23:22 [22] Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

Proverbs 23:24-25 [24] The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, And he who begets a wise *child* will delight in him. [25] Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her who bore you rejoice.

Proverbs 29:3 [3] Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice, But a companion of harlots wastes *his* wealth.

Proverbs 29:15 [15] The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left *to himself* brings shame to his mother.

Proverbs 29:17 [17] Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul.

Proverbs 30:17 [17] The eye *that* mocks *his* father, And scorns obedience to *his* mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

Review:

- 1. It began in Jonathan Edwards' *heart*.**
- 2. Jonathan chose his wife carefully and well.**
- 3. Their marriage was characterized by intense mutual affection and respect.**
- 4. Family worship was central to family life.**
- 5. Honor and obedience were secured from the children.**

Hymn 719 - A Christian Home (RTH)