

RECOGNIZING GOD'S PLAN FOR THE HOME

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To understand our topic, we want to define the terms as we are using them in this discussion. "Recognizing" is the not just seeing something, but accepting that something. We not only know what it is, but we accept it and put it into practice. It is the rule. We accept no substitutions.

When we talk about "God's plan", we are saying that there is a system in place. This system comes from God in Heaven, and does not belong to anyone else. A plan carries with it the idea of an orderly arrangement that will bring us to our goal.

This plan we will be discussing is "for the home". We are not talking about a plan to build a physical structure, which is our house, even though sometimes we call it our home. We are talking about those individuals who compose the family unit. Is there a plan that tells us about what comprises this family unit and how they are to operate? That in reality is our discussion today.

If we were to examine the homes with which we are familiar, it would be safe to say that we would have trouble recognizing that a plan exists. In one home, we see a single parent; in another, two parents. Unfortunately, in some homes, we see two parents who are of the same sex. We find spouses who are abused or not respected. We have children who fear their parents or others in the household - a fear that is grounded in their abuse and neglect. It is obvious that in all of these cases, they are not following a plan, at least, not the same plan.

A plan by its very nature will only give us one thing. A carpenter looks at a blueprint; builds off the blueprint; and produces the structure shown on the blueprint. A different carpenter takes the same blueprint and goes to a different place. He builds off this blueprint and he produces the structure shown on the blueprint. A comparison of the two structures built will show them to be identical. Why? They were both built using the same plan.

If God has a plan for the home, then when everyone follows that plan they will all have the home that God desires. We will find the same thing existent in each home. Love, compassion, harmony, and unity will be in all of these homes. The structure of the homes will be the same. Why? They were built off the same plan.

It will be our endeavor to not only show what God's plan is, but to encourage everyone to recognize this plan. Again, not just seeing the plan, but putting it into practice. The best thought-

out plans are not good, unless we take the plan and use it. We get the desired result of the plan when we accept the plan and adhere to the plan.

It is important for us to understand that God does have a plan for the home. The basic portion of this plan is found in Genesis 2:24 – *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh”*. Later, Jesus will refer to this same statement in Matthew 19:1-6. We must recognize that God has as the basis of the home a man and a woman who are working in harmony with one another. It is also his plan that no one disrupts this home.

God expects, yea demands, that his plan be followed. It is those that do his will that will go to Heaven (Matthew 7:21). We are to keep his commandments (1 John 5:3). We are to walk in the light (1 John 1:7). We are not to add to nor take from God's law (Revelation 22:18,19). Since sin is a transgression of God's law, to not keep his plan is sin (1 John 3:4).

What is the plan which God has set forth for the home? There are three parts to the home (Remember the home is the people, not a physical structure). These parts are: the man, the woman, the child or children. Each of these has a distinct role in the home, some of which we will discuss in this lesson. It should be noted that by definition these three parts are not the same. What has happened to our society is that we have confused and changed the roles of each of these parts.

God placed the man as the head of the home (Ephesians 5:23). While many will recognize this fact, they will try to minimize what this means. In many cases, people have reduced the husband to merely a figurehead with no real power. We tend to want to make man and woman equal in the marriage, with no one being the head, but both being equal partners. This, of course, has led to real confusion in our homes today because chaos comes when there is no proper leadership.

But, lest we fail to understand the authority of the man, God tells us what that authority is. The man is the head of the home as Christ is the head of the church. Do we dare to teach that Christ and the members of the church are equal partners? Do we dare to teach that Christ does not have complete authority? The husband's headship of the home is equal to Christ's headship of the church. Christ is our benevolent monarch who leads us in the way of God (John 12:49,50). The man must lead the home in the way of God, as he rules over the home.

The woman is said to be in subjection to the man in the home (Ephesians 5:22,24). In our age of women's liberation, the idea of being subject to the man in anything is opposed by many, even some men. However, what the world thinks about this does not change the fact that God said the woman is subject to the man. How subject? Ephesians 5:22 says *“as unto the Lord.”* Ephesians 5:24 teaches *“as the church is subject to the Lord.”*

We have a serious problem with children today. Children are supposed to be obeying their parents (Ephesians 6:1), yet many rebel against or ignore their parents. Too many children talk back to their parents and act like they are the one's in charge of the home. This has led to many unhappy children and a lack of respect for authority in general.

Children should understand that God has no tolerance for disobedience. Among the many sins found in Romans 1, there is this sin listed – “*disobedient to parents*” (verse 20) Further, in Deuteronomy 21:18ff, God prescribed the punishment for the disobedient child. These children were taken out and killed. While things are not quite to that extent today, these passages do serve to emphasize that God expects children to obey their parents.

The other part of God's plan for the home is that there be one man and one woman married to each other for life (Genesis 2:23,24; Matthew 19:1-6; Romans 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:39). The rule of the home is that nothing but death severs the marriage bond. Too many enter the marriage bond without the commitment to “finish the course”.

Of course, the latest attack against God's plan is for two homosexuals to be given the right to “marry” one another and constitute a home. However, this is man's plan and not God's. Man's plans are always doomed; and God's are always successful. God joined the MAN and the WOMAN together in the marriage bond.

In the plan that God has given us for the home, what is the purpose of the home? In actuality, there are several. When God instituted the home, he did so to help fulfill the needs of mankind. Some of these needs can only be fulfilled in the home.

After man was created, it was noted that it was not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). The solution to this problem was to create a helper suitable (“help meet”) for man. We should pay close attention to what takes place next. God brought the animals before Adam, and Adam gave them names (Genesis 2:19,20). However, at the end of verse 20, God lets us know another purpose for his bringing the animals before animal – to find a help meet for him. Yet, none was found among the animals.

Man has sought companionship in all the wrong places. He has decided that material possessions could bring him happiness. God, on the other hand, lets us know that such is not the case (Read also the book of Ecclesiastes). God gave man what he needed in order to fulfill the need for companionship. God created woman (Genesis 2:21-23). To solve the need for companionship, God created the home.

Another purpose of the home is to fulfill the sexual desires of man. In a world in which sexual activity seems to have no restraint, we need to understand what God has said concerning man's sexual needs. In 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, we are shown that God set up the home for a man and a woman to meet their sexual desires. It should always be understood that the following is true, and all else is false:

1. The desire of the husband is to be to his **own** wife.
2. The desire of the wife is to be to her **own** husband.
3. **Only** in the marriage bond can one fulfill sexual desires (See also Hebrews 13:4).

Fornication is a word that means “illicit sexual activity”. It includes such things as homosexuality and adultery. Fornication is wrong because it violates God's plan for the home.

The home was set up for children to be born. We live in a world in which it is sometimes viewed as an "honor" to have children without the benefit of marriage. Our public assistance rolls are full of people who have come about their children in this way. Children are supposed to be a product of the home. Adam and Eve had the first children – a product of their home (Genesis 4). God teaches us that children are an heritage from the Lord (Psalms 127:3). Fathers are taught to teach their children the way of God (Ephesians 6:4). Children are the responsibility of the home. We have created many problems in our society because people have violated God's plan for the home in bearing children.

One very important reason for the home is to help one another go to Heaven (2 Timothy 1:5; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:34,35). The work of Jesus was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Our work as Christians is to teach God's word to the world (Mark 16:15). In the home, we have the responsibility to guide the souls of those in the home. The home is our special charge. Note especially Ephesians 5:29: *"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church"*.

Because man has failed to recognize God's plan for the home, we are now beset with many problems in our society. Because there is such a lax view of marriage, it is not uncommon for children to have several "sets of parents". Of course, they have visitation rights! It is not unusual to find Little Johnny with one mother, two "fathers", and six grandparents. Is it any wonder that Little Johnny is confused, and he does not have a healthy view of marriage and the home?

In the United States, as well as other countries I am sure, we have a rise in single parent families, most brought about by either divorce or having children without also having a husband. We have seen an increase of the need to provide assistance for these children because the single parent in many cases cannot. Has anyone else noticed that since we have changed God's plan for the home that the number of children on "hyperactivity" drugs is on the increase? Also, that stress levels, even in children, is extremely high?

When man broke down the barriers and changed God's plan for the home, he opened up the door for evil to plague the home. We hear more and more reports of children being kidnapped by their "other" parent. Molestation and rape have increased.

We have even introduced a new term to describe our violation of God's plan – "significant other". This term covers the woman the man is now "living with" but is not married to. Or, the man the woman is now "living with" but is not married to. It covers the homosexual partner that someone has. It can only be an attempt to soothe the conscience to tell ourselves that this person is "significant" to us.

History reveals to us that when man destroys the home, he also destroys his society and nation. The strength of any nation is its homes. As a nation, we are committing "suicide" when we attack the plan for the home that God has put in place.

The church has also been greatly affected by the changes in the home. Now, many Christians feel a need to defend a child who has been divorced, even when they know the divorce is for a reason not found in Scripture. And, we are also coming into contact with more and more people

who have problems in their homes, usually caused by divorce. Rather than confront the situations before us and answer them from the word of God, many will try to find other "reasons" or "ideas" that will make these situations right. We will do so even if it means we must compromise Scripture.

Because we are seeing more and more problems in our society, many in the church see a need to provide for these people. So, we are now seeing more seminars, talks, or counselors to help meet the "felt needs" of these people. In all of these, the word of God is left out and the ideas of man are preeminent. If we truly want to help anyone, we need to give them God's word as their guide (Read John 8:31,32).

What can we do? As Christians, we need to quit listening to men and start listening to God. If we want a home that is serving God's purpose, we need to study God's rule book, his word, and apply it to our lives. As parents, we need to emphasize four things to our children and engrain these in them.

Marry someone who will help you go to Heaven.

1. You will be with the person you marry on a constant basis. You cannot return them.
2. You will be influenced in everything you do by your mate.
3. You must recognize God's plan for the home, and fulfill God's plan.