

The Virtuous Home -

In 1950 Bob Pierce founded what has become World Vision the world's largest Christian relief and development agency. Today that organization serves more than 50 million people a year in 103 countries. Passionate for Jesus and for a world without hunger or disease, Bob Pierce began humbly helping children orphaned by the Korean war. Every outreach he touched grew in size and scope. With unstoppable vision and energy he dreamed the impossible and then did everything imaginable to make it happen.

Books and magazine cover stories were written about him. His friends said, "He is a man restless to win souls," "I have never met a person with greater compassion," and "He is a true Christian Samaritan who literally laid down his life for the needy 'little' people of the world"

Bob often prayed, "Let my heart be broken by things that break the heart of God." That zeal drove him to the ends of the earth, marked by a seemingly inexhaustible passion to meet spiritual and human needs wherever he saw them.

Unfortunately his approach had disastrous consequences for his family. As one family friend stated politely, Bob's wife, Lorraine, "knew deprivation of a different kind than those to whom her husband was ministering."

What Bob didn't know was that the Virtuous life is not Lived Exclusively from our families

¹⁸Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

²¹Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

¹Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

-every NT use of the word for submission involves some sense of hierarchy

-only context determines whether the subordination is compulsory or voluntary

-eg Luke 2:51 Jesus was in submission to his parents

-this does not mean that he was forced to be submissive to his parents rather he was voluntarily

submissive to his parents

- however demons submitting to the name of Christ is in Luke 10:17 is an involuntary act of submission and in Rom 10:3 there is an example of the Jews who refused to submit thus indicating a voluntary right to refuse to submit
- Just as husbands are called to love their wives with a self-sacrificing love so wives are called to put aside their own agendas in submission to their own husbands
- The ideal, of course is that this will be mutually voluntary
- Only then will the Christian home function as God's wants it to
- Biblical submission for the wife is the divine calling to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it on through according to her gifts
- it is sincerely supporting the leadership of your husband as deeply as obedience to Christ will allow
- so long as it does not contradict with Christian values
- Wifely submission cannot be forced; it must come from her own free will.
- As it is fit in the Lord** means that the wife's submission to her husband is proper in her relationship with Christ:
- thus submission rendered to her husband is submission rendered to Christ.
- this wonderful gift given by a wife is prompted by her husband's unselfish love and never to be forced on her by her husband

- wives cannot live a life of obedience to Christ if they do not willing to submit to their husbands eg Seminary

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

- in the ancient world a wife was often consider little more than property
- Paul's command is thus revolutionary
- The primary responsibility of the married man is to love his wife
- in love we will sacrifice our needs for our wife's needs
- we will not have a give and take mentality or a 50/50 understanding to marriage
- that is conditional love and not the kind the apostle is talking about
- we will give out of joy to do so and not to receive
- we will not demand or expect to be rewarded for the 40 hours or more we work to provide for our families
- we will serve sacrificially with Christ as our model
- The Greek word for love here is a willing and sacrificial giving of oneself for the benefit of another, without thought of return
- thus husbands will not hold grudges
- Christian husbands are not to be harsh with their wives as this is inconsistent with the Christian life and must be done away with
- harshness includes things: such as contempt, eg eye rolling; criticism; and defensiveness,.

- The husband who loves his wife will not be rude, unkind, or cruel toward her.
- This verse implies that wifely submission is gained in part by the husband's love.
- this type of love does not denote affection or romance
- self-devotion not self-satisfaction is its dominant trait

²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

- In most manuscripts (including the oldest) the Greek reads, "well-pleasing *in* the Lord." -That is, obedience to parental authority is pleasing to the Lord in the child's relationship with Him.
- A child's obedience given to parents is obedience given to Christ.
- I would preface this to say that what Paul is talking about refers to children still in the same household and being supported by their parents
- the everything in context is under the assumption that the parents are motivated by godly intentions
- to rebel against one's parents is sin and rebellion against God

²¹Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged

- Father's, being the heads of the home, are responsible for guarding against frustrating children as parents there is a delicate balance
- our children need to be instructed and corrected as

- well as encouraged
- if a child is encouraged too much without correction they will learn nothing and grow into amoral menaces
- it comes from the belief that if one encourages a child exclusively apart from correcting them the child will become a good person
- this does not work
- the child will become spoiled
- the flip side is what Paul is talking about
- it is a parent that over corrects and gives little or no encouragement
- if this occurs the child will grow to believe that he or she can do nothing right and will then become discouraged anger and embittered as scripture says

²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

- the slave reference would have little to do with any modern application to us in this church
- however I would relate it to employment that whatever your job or circumstance we are to consider God to be in authority over us as he is over all and we thus should work at whatever job we have with a desire to see him glorified
- we see Paul reveal this in his next verse

²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

- Paul realizes that he is speaking to a group of people that may feel very trapped in their slavery
- slavery here is not the kind that we would associate with North American 18th and 19th century slavery
- the slavery that we see here is people who would sell themselves into slavery in order to pay off a debt
- Paul's encouragement to them is so that they will live those lives that glorify God even when they are not in the most ideal situation
- verse 25 is a reference to natural repercussions of doing wrong
- just because you are a Christian does not exempt you from the natural repercussion of doing wrong in the same way just because you are a Christian and you have a job you don't like it doesn't exempt you from being fired
- Paul is challenging the slave to fix their goal that awaits them in eternity

¹Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

- lastly those who have authority over others are not to abuse their authority with the knowledge that God is in authority over them
- As they want God to be just and fair with them, so

they must be toward their servants.

Employers also have a duty not to take advantage of employees.

-Instead they should offer a just wage, proper benefits, and adequate rest.

-In contemporary societies, many of these benefits are required by government regulations.

-But how much better when Christian employers treat their employees well for the Lord's sake, knowing that they too have **a Master in heaven**

-This section is not to be taken in isolation or as individual verses apart from the context it was meant to be taken in.

-it may seem initially problematic that Paul doesn't address problems in the family like children and spouses not being believers

-he does this on purpose

-This is Paul's or God's vision of what a Christian household looks like.

-In striving to live a virtuous life the apostle wants us to know that it is important to realize that...

The Virtuous life is not Lived Exclusively from our families

Bob Pierce treated his family with contempt, believing that excluding, ignoring, and neglecting his family was ok because he found a higher calling. The stark reality is that he all but abandoned his own family. He had consistently put the opportunities for expansion and greater impact

ahead of his wife and children. It has the appearance of self sacrifice for God but it was lacking in virtue. For example when one of his daughters attempted suicide, she phoned him on one of his overseas trips and asked him to come home soon.

“I just needed to feel Daddy’s arms around me,” she later explained

Nothing required him to stay there in the Far East. He could have taken the next flight home. His wife pleaded with him to return. Instead, sensing the urgency and demands of so many people in need around him, he booked a flight to Viet Nam.

“I knew he wouldn’t come,” his daughter later said. Several years later she did succeed in taking her life.

Bob’s relationship with his wife also deteriorated over time. At one point, years passed when they did not even speak. His relationships with his two remaining children were equally strained. By the final year of his life at the age of sixty-four, Bob Pierce was alienated from everyone in his immediate family,

-In our last discussion we learned that Paul was showing the Colossians how to live a life in grateful dedication

-We learned the Colossians will desire to do this because of the fantastic gift of grace that was given

to them by simply believing in the person of Jesus Christ

-Essentially Paul has already told the Colossians everything that they needed to know in order to live godly lives in appreciation for the grace that God has given them

-And yet he insists on repeating some of these virtues here in these verses

- love

-Don’t be harsh

- obey

-don’t discourage

- do everything to please God eg verse 17

-be merciful

-In repeating the virtues, by giving the specific application to the family Paul is highlighting -the need for virtue to be exemplified in every area of life not just the community, not just -the individual not just the church but especially and purposefully in the family

We are to make our holiness a priority in our homes

We are to live the godly life among those we are closest to

We are to emulate Christ not just individually not just corporately but also in our homes

We are to pursue righteousness through the committing and service of those that we are closest to

Paul’s message to the Colossians

God's message to us is that we should live lives of holiness in every area of our lives
Especially within the family
Especially with our children and spouses and parents
If we are called to forgive and be forgiving within the community
How much more are we called to do it for those we are related to
The mission of God
The purposes of the almighty
Do not negate our responsibilities and integrity within the family
If we are sincere in our desire to living a life of gratitude it will be reflected in all our lives especially in our families
Wives you will want to submit to your husbands
-Husbands you will want to love your wives and not be harsh with them
-Children you will want to obey your parents
-Fathers you will be careful not to embitter your children
-Workers your desire to work well will be founded on your desire to please God
-Employers you will be merciful because you will inspired by the mercy that God has -shown you through Jesus Christ
-striving to achieve and live this life will not burden us because it will be founded on God's strength and ability as we yield ourselves to him

-if we understand what we have been saved from we will desire to live the virtuous life in every facet of our lives especially in our families

The Home is Often Treated as a Barrier to the Virtuous Life

Bob Pierce's apathetic and sometimes hostile behavior toward his family revealed a man that did not value his closest relations but indeed saw them as an impediment.

Years of eighteen-hour days, unsanitary food, and constant jet lag gradually depleted Bob's emotional reserves and made him susceptible o all kinds of physical difficulties. One biographer wrote, "the temper that he had battled all his life to control got the upper hand more and more often, and the mind that had once operated with computer-like accuracy began short-circuiting occasionally, causing a growing erraticism in his behavior." Bob became easily provoked and enraged

Bob's oft-cited request, "Just let me burn out for God," was sadly being fulfilled.

Bob's relationship with the board of World Vision also had an unhappy tension-filled ending. In 1963 the world Vision board overruled him for the first time, voting to cancel his weekly radio broadcasts, citing financial factors. Later that year the board put him on medical leave; he was overseas as usual and chose to stay there for his recuperation apart from his family. He eventually got Better but the tensions at world vision did not

In 1967, at a highly charged board meeting, Bob Pierce resigned. The legal documents of agreement were brought the next day, and Bob Pierce resigned. His daughter Marilee wrote a book telling both the miracles and the dark side of their painful home life

All the while Bob continue to treat his home as an impediment to his cause

-The Colossians have been living, striving in fear to be individually holy as well as appearing holy in the community to those that judge them according to Gnostic principles

-in their ridiculous quest to gain God's approval they have fallen short in their understanding

-it is Paul's point after telling them that God has approved of them to point them to godly living that especially involves virtuous living in the family

-if they are sincere in their desire to live a virtuous life

-if they are truly grateful for the salvation that God has given them

-they will live a virtuous life in every area especially family

-but this is often not the case

-in our quest for spiritual growth and to live a life in grateful dedication ignoring familial responsibilities and godliness within the home occurs often

Eg wife

-when striving to live the Christian life and to live a life that is honoring to God we often do not include our family

For three reasons

1) they get in the way

-they are a distraction and come in the way of our disciplines and devotions to God

-eg prayer, Bible study, church

2) they challenge our integrity

-kids fight, we fight

-arbitration

"I had no idea what a selfish person I was until I got married and had a family"

3) contempt

-eg children rebellion against

Feminism; how dare you think you are in authority over me

Fathers and Parents considering children a burden and caring little for the feelings or offsprings feelings

Husbands believing their wives to be unworthy of consideration or sacrifice

-If our virtue and holiness and integrity is lacking within our homes and yet to others outside ourselves we uphold the integrity and have the appearance of Christ we are living a life not in dedication to God but in dedication to ourselves
-regardless of how much we are reading scripture

praying fasting, serving

-if we neglect our virtuous life within our homes we are behaving hypocritically and not living to glorify God

The Home is not a Barrier to Living Virtuously but a tool for building our Virtues

-Paul has led the Colossians to increasing wonderful revelations as he comes to a close of his instruction to them

-he desires them to live a completely Christian life that is founded on a proper belief in Jesus Christ themselves

-having such knowledge should naturally lead them to a life of grateful dedication individually, corporately and within the family

-The passage is a wonderful depiction of what God wants the Christian family to look like

-it is the way a family will look if we are all determined to live for God's glory

-Regardless of whether you have a family or not the message is clear that displaying a Christ-like life in every facet of our lives is a life that is truly dedicated to the glory of God

- Bob Pierce Sacrificed his Integrity with his family and needlessly neglected them

-But the example of Bob Pierce is incomplete because it is only about one man failing in his role as head over the family

-The virtuous family is not established through the commitment of one person in the family but every person, man, woman and child

-Living a virtuous life in our homes or other areas in our lives where we fall short is a matter of perspective

-If we see our families as impediments to serving God or living virtuously, resentment will occur

-If we prioritize our spiritual growth over our families we will become upset when disturbed

-If we think that serving God involves the exclusion of our responsibly in our families then wives will stop submitting, husbands will be harsh, children will not obey and like the example of Bob Pierce when our integrity and virtue fails in one facet of our lives in time it will fail completely

-If we want to live a virtuous life in every area especially our families

-If we are serious about living a life that is glorious to God

-If we want to live a complete life of virtue in our families

-If we have been convinced and desire to please and honor God in all our life

-There are six things that are guaranteed to please our Savior

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Employees work, with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

Employers, provide your employees with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Bob often prayed , “Let my heart be broken by things that break the heart of God.” **God showered Bob the pain in his family but Bob’s heart was too hard to soften. Our heart must not be too hard if we truly desire to live a virtuous life in our homes in grateful dedication to our God.**