

# Manage His Household Well

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## *Detailed Outline Part 1 of 3*

### **Introduction**

- A. A key biblical qualification for elders is to manage family well and have believing children.
- B. In some parts of the world, a potential employer who asks a job applicant about his family life could be charged with bias or discrimination. That's off limits.
- C. But in the church a man's family life has a direct bearing on his ability to shepherd.
- D. It's a touchy subject, but it is important and essential.

### **I. Why is This Important?**

#### **A. One of the significant analogies God uses to describe the New Testament Church is family or household.**

- 1. For example, Paul to Timothy, wrote:

*... In case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.  
(1 Tim. 3:15 NASB)*

- 2. Writer Hebrews, superiority of Christ over Moses and Law, wrote:

*Christ was faithful as Son over His house—whose house we are. (Heb. 3:6a)*

- 3. The Church is a family. God is our Father. We are His children. We are brothers and sisters in Christ.
- 4. The church is not a building for religious services. It is not an organization of volunteers. It is not a club of homogeneous look-alikes.
- 5. The church is people, believers in Jesus Christ, the people of God.

#### **B. God has been family-oriented from the beginning.**

- 1. He began the human race with the creation of a family, Adam and Eve.
- 2. The next stage in biblical history had to do with their children, Cain and Abel.

#### **C. God choose the family of Abraham and descendants, through Sarah.**

*"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you [Abraham], and you will be the father of a multitude of nations." (Gen. 17:4)*

- 1. Jews took that seriously; they were all related to the family of Abraham.
- 2. In Jesus' time, some echoed this in their reaction to Jesus' teachings:

*They answered and said to him, "Abraham is our father..." (John 8:39)*

3. Jews normally referred to themselves as the children of Abraham, an extended family.

**D. So it is not unusual for Christians to see themselves as an extended family.**

*So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Gal. 6:10)*

**E. There are many similarities between managing a physical family and a spiritual family.**

1. In a healthy family there is intimacy, connectedness, sense of belonging with relatives, discipline, guidance, training.
2. In a healthy church, the goal is for spiritual intimacy, connectedness and belonging, discipline and training.
3. Entirely appropriate to consider how elder is doing managing his own personal family, in particular his children.

## **II. What is the Command?**

*“He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)” (1 Tim. 3:4–5)*

**A. We need to unpack this carefully.**

1. Clearly, a man’s ability at managing his family is indicative of how he will manage the church family.
2. The family is a “proving” ground for whether he is faithful in the little things, namely his family. This will determine whether he will be faithful in the bigger things, namely the church.

*“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. (Luke 16:10)*

**B. He must manage his household well.**

1. This is the same word “manage” as in 1 Timothy 5:17 where the elder who “rules well” or “manages well” is to be honored.
2. Greek word is *prohistemi*, which means to rule or lead, loving, servant leadership.
3. Not in worldly sense, but true leadership, influencing family spiritually areas that Scripture assigns to fathers.
4. Is a man leading his family well, does his family have a reputation of being well ordered, in control with the father leading the way?
5. In the early chapters of Proverbs youth is pictured as a blank slate to be filled with the teachings of the father. While the emphasis there is on how the son responds, here for an elder the emphasis is on how well he manages filling up that slate.

**C. He must keep his children under control with dignity.**

1. Are his children under control?
2. Do they obey and show respect?
3. Or are they characterized as being out of controlled?
4. Children's behavior certainly can run the spectrum, but there should be a general sense in congregation that the man has a controlled household.

**D. Are the children repressed?**

1. This can be caused by over-control.

*Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart. (Col. 3:21)*

2. Some fathers have very obedient children, not out of respect but out of terror.
3. The issue is more the father's reputation rather than proper parenting. Iron fist, but inwardly bitterness. When they are old, they bolt.

**E. Is he an absentee father?**

1. A man can be so devoted to the church that he neglects his own family! This will exasperate his children and his wife. It is hard to manage your children if you are not there.
2. A man's first order of ministry is own family.
  - a) A man is not commanded to love the church the way Christ loved the church. But to love his wife the way Christ loved the church. (Eph. 5:25)
  - b) A man's first order of ministry is the discipleship group called his family. If he can disciple them in the ways of the Lord, how can he disciple anyone else?
  - c) How can a man justify spending time with other Christians and not spend adequate time with the Christians of his own family?
  - d) Spending time with family
  - e) I know of many who had church leaders as fathers. The fathers loved and spent time with the church folks, but not with their own families. Bitterness often resulted.
  - f) Commitment to spiritual leadership does not justify absenteeism in the home.

**F. What about rebellious children?**

1. God is a perfect Father, yet he has many rebellious children.
2. Every parent knows that children go through various stages of development, and some of that may manifest itself in different ways.
3. The adolescent years in particular seem to be a time of experimentation, as children grow from thinking like a child, to thinking independently like an adult—that can challenge all parents, and it is not easy for children either.

4. The important thing is not whether a child goes through times of rebellion. Rather what is important is how the man deals with difficult-to-discipline children.
5. The reality is that some children have more active temperaments. Some are naturally more compliant. I have had one of each.
6. This is a difficult call.
7. End results, or grown children, provide a much better perspective.

**G. Should a man wait until his children are grown to determine the outcome of his management abilities?**

1. To wait until then may limit qualified elders. To be sure, the older the children are the better for evaluation of a man's ability.
2. A child can behave well, being raised well, but when he becomes independent, he may at that time rebel against God due to his own sinful heart. That can't be held against the father as a disqualifier from eldership.
3. Now, how can we identify when a man manages his family well?
4. We must take all the qualifications into consideration. Is he above repute in these?
5. As mentioned, this is a judgment call, BUT a judgment must be made.

### **III. Is it Required That an Elder's Children Must All be Saved?**

*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would . . . appoint elders . . . namely, if any man is . . . the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. (Titus 1:5-6)*

**A. Excludes the Extremes**

1. Men whose children are obviously rebellious and have reputation of extremely wasteful life (the word "debauchery" is sometimes used in translation).
2. Having children in constant trouble with authority, substance abuse, undisciplined.
3. William MacDonald writes:

*"If a man rules his own house well, he will avoid the extremes of undue harshness and of unrighteous leniency." – William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary*

**B. One Interpretation: His children must be saved.**

1. Good parenting certainly influences a child toward faith.
2. After all, the numerous commands in Scripture about parenting assume there is a relationship between parenting skills and how children turn out spiritually.
3. BUT faith is not inherited from or enforced by parents.
4. God is the perfect Father, yet every one of his children has spiritually rebelled.
5. Faith is ultimately the responsibility of the individual child.

**C. Another translation is “faithful children.”**

1. Children who are faithful to teachings of their father have a general behavior of godliness.
2. As with many of the listed qualifications, the standard of measure is subjective.

**IV. Conclusion**

- A. Scripture is clear. There is a definite link between how a man manages his household and his ability to oversee the spiritual family of God.
- B. This is a judgment call. At what point does a child become “too” rebellious, or when a child’s life becomes indicative of poor or insufficient parenting?
- C. Though application of this may involve difficult judgments, we need to take it seriously.
- D. Raising children is not easy. It is a significant challenge on a man to be the head and manager of his household.
- E. It is that context of the family that a man demonstrates the abilities needed for managing and shepherding the household of God.
- F. This needs to be taken seriously because the church of God, the people of God, is at stake.

# Manage His Household Well: Discussion Panel

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*Detailed Outline  
Part 2 of 3*

The following are the questions discussed during the recorded discussion.

1. All of us have grown children and even grandchildren. You know how difficult raising children can be. Why do you think a man's family life is such an important consideration for identifying elders?
2. Why is this qualification so difficult to judge, so touchy?
3. It seems there is always some level of rebellion during the teen years. How does this fit into an elders' qualification?
4. Is it fair to judge a man's parenting by how his children behave?

# Manage His Household Well: Discussion Panel

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*Detailed Outline*  
*Part 3 of 3*

The following are the questions from the recorded discussion.

5. Is there a danger in having elders whose children are not old enough to determine how they are doing at managing their households?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What have you done to manage your own households well, to disciple you own family?