

The Biblical Trustee Family

Understanding God's Purpose
for Your Household

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*Lessons Learned from Years of Homeschooling:
A Christian Mother Shares Her Insights from
a Quarter Century of Teaching Her Children*

*The Homeschool Life:
God's Way to Family-Based Education*

*Teach My While My Heart is Tender:
Read Aloud Stories of Repentance and Forgiveness*

To Nicki O'Donovan,
a true woman of honour

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INTRODUCTION

Had someone asked me in my youth if I ever imagined myself a published author, I would have laughed, never considering myself a writer. Yet, here I am composing the introduction to my third book. My first two, *Lessons Learned from Years of Homeschooling* and *The Homeschool Life*, have been well received and I continually get feedback from readers that both volumes have helped them initiate or stay the course in their homeschooling endeavors. This present work has a different focus, but one compatible with Christian education administered and overseen by parents.

The following essays first appeared in the Chalcedon magazine *Faith for All of Life* and zero in on the family and its Biblical function in furthering the Kingdom of God. Inspired by the writing and scholarship of R. J. Rushdoony and his emphasis on the family's foundational importance to a godly society, they develop the implications of God's law as a means to strengthen the institution of the family and return it to its proper role. Thanks to Rushdoony's extensive body of work and the continuing ministry of the Chalcedon Foundation, Christian families today are better equipped to exercise their callings under God, working within the context of Christian community. However, there is still much to be accomplished.

We must respond to our deteriorating culture and loss of liberty by reclaiming the family's place as an independent law-sphere with an emphasis on godly dominion. Civil liberty begins with the Christian self-government of the individual nurtured in the context of family life, and further developed by the church's faithful preaching of the law-word of God. This is a major component of God's plan for victory, and the intent of this short work.

I

THE BIBLICAL TRUSTEE FAMILY

Rousas J. Rushdoony's central impact on the Biblical family involved his unabashed declaration that as God's basic institution, the *Biblical* family is the primary force in the fulfillment of the dominion mandate and the Great Commission. While placing him in the bull's-eye of those who disagreed with him, his thesis never nullified the God-given purpose of the church or the state, but rather placed the family as the institution that makes godly ecclesiastical and civil life possible.

But to modern man, the family is merely a convention, a convenience of growing up whereby people associate (are fed, clothed, and sheltered) by people not of their own choosing. The biological bonds are considered less and less vital as members of the family grow, eager to gain their independence from those they depended on as youth but no longer need. The current landscape (with rampant divorce, living arrangements that never involve marriage, and same-sex unions) has so diluted and polluted the definition of *family* that it is increasingly difficult to "come to terms" with what the Scripture means when giving commands and directives to the family.

Three Views

Rushdoony classifies the family in three ways. He describes what most of us are familiar with today as the *atomistic family*. He states:

In the atomistic family, the individual seeks freedom from the family bonds. Father, mother, and children see the family as restraints; the basic unit for them is not the family but the individual ... Neither the parents nor the children like the idea of sacrificing for the welfare and independence of the family; it is their purely individual welfare and independence which concerns them ... The atomistic family sees ... the rise of the Leviathan state, of statist power and totalitarianism. There is an essential relationship between family structure and cultural and political conditions.¹

Modern culture places high importance on self-esteem and personal accomplishment, as though individual achievements occur independently from family assistance. Moreover, it is considered a “rite of passage” for children to grow up and “leave” their homes to become independent adults. With such a migration away from strong family life occurring on a regular basis, is it any wonder why it is hard for most Christians (let alone non-Christians) to view the family as an institution that can truly stand side-by-side in importance with the church and the state? If the family is merely the temporary provider of food, clothing, and shelter, with health, education, and welfare being taken care of outside the family, then it is hardly on a par with the other institutions, let alone primary before them.

Since many of those reading this are products of the early to mid-twentieth century, there may be some recollections of the extended family, or what Rushdoony calls the *domestic family*.

The domestic family ... stands between the trustee family and the atomistic family. The domestic family tries to get the best of both worlds—freedom for the individual and stability for the family. The family loyalties are still maintained, but the state has become the major institution in society, and men depend more on the state than the family.²

1. “The Trustee Family” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction: Symposium on the Family*, Vol. IV, No. 2, Winter 1977-78, 12.

2. *Ibid.*, 11.

This usurpation leaves the domestic family mostly concerned with baby and wedding showers, family reunions, graduations, and holidays. The biggest issues revolve around at whose house Christmas dinner will be served and celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

Rushdoony presents a superior perspective and orientation to family life as ordained by God. He calls this the *Biblical trustee family*:

The trustee family has the most power and scope. It is called the trustee family because its living members see themselves as trustees of the family blood, rights, property, name, and position for their lifetime. They have an inheritance from the past to be preserved and developed for the future. The trustee family is the basic social power ... The head of the family is not the head in any personal sense but as *family* head and as a trustee of powers.³

Examples are many in Scripture that illustrate the importance God places on the family. First and foremost are the family lineages that are enumerated over and over, demonstrating that God works primarily through families rather than ecclesiastical or civil jurisdictions. Accordingly, His promises to Abraham are familial in nature:

And thy *seed* shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy *seed* shall all the *families* of the earth be blessed. (Gen. 28:14, emphasis added)

Men like Jacob, Naboth, and Cornelius are all examples of individuals who had greater concern for their trustee families than their own self-interests and individual rights.

Rushdoony wasn't satisfied to view the family in its modern depiction and practice. He expounded upon the Biblical pattern of the trustee family. For it is only the trustee family that can hold its own against an overarching church or state.

He powerfully states:

In Scripture, the family is man's basic church, state, school, society, welfare agency, and social power. Control of the children and their education rests with the family, but strictly in terms of God's law.

3. Ibid.

Inheritance is a family power, in terms of faith. Welfare is a family duty, not only with respect to non-related widows, orphans, and strangers (Deut. 14:28–29), but also and especially with all relatives, for “if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house [or, kindred], he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8). The authority of the husband, and of the wife, is not personal but theological and is a trusteeship for God, first of all, and then the family.⁴

Rushdoony makes two astute observations that are mere footnotes:

When conservative Christians think of the godly family, they tend to think of the domestic rather than the trustee family; as a result, the individual man is exalted as head of the household rather than placed strictly in a trusteeship, in a position of custodial powers.⁵

He also notes that the headship of the husband is not understandable if viewed from a modern perspective. He held that the current view was more worthy of reproach because it is more properly described as male chauvinism rather than an embracing of the idea of trusteeship.⁶ Thus, rather than a *my house my rules* mentality, the head of the trustee family looks to lead by means of service, education, and discernment, with an eye toward future generations and their life of service and obedience to the Living God.

Enemies of the Family

How can anyone ever understand the concept of the family of God if the earlier concept of the trustee family is overlooked and ignored?

Is it any wonder that the modern church wants little to do with Biblical law and its establishment of the trustee family? Strong families would imply and necessitate the restructuring of church programs onto Biblical grounds concentrating on equipping the saints in and through families. Programs designed for children, women, singles, men, married couples, senior citizens, recovering addicts, etc., would be replaced with efforts to build and recognize strong Biblical trustee families. Then, rather than calling for *strong*

4. Ibid., 12.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 11.

family values, there would be concerted efforts to reinforce godliness by affirming the structure, function, and life of trustee family life.

Likewise, the modern state has little use for powerful trustee families—those that take care of and provide for their own. How would it be possible to grow the state if the functions it has usurped were taken back and carried out by trustee families according to God’s prescribed order? Earlier and earlier compulsory school attendance laws are the most recent salvos launched against families, working to disengage children from their parents’ control and responsibility during their most formative years. Combine this with the move to socialized medicine, preserving social security, offering student loans, and more, and you see a very active and deliberate effort to grab and maintain power. For the trustee family to live as it should, there would of necessity be a very limited civil state (one that does not dangle carrots to transfer allegiance), because, as Rushdoony states, “[E]ssential government would be in its own hands.”⁷

Throughout his writing, preaching, and lectures, Rushdoony continued to point to the need for the restoration of the Biblical trustee family. His prophetic voice launched a return to Biblical priorities:

Our present cultural crisis is a family crisis, i.e., it is rooted in the decline of the biblical trustee family and the rise of the humanistic, atomistic family. Since 1950, however, in the United States there has been a dramatic but unheralded revival of the biblical pattern. Concern about education and the rise of the Christian school [and homeschool] movement[s] ha[s] been basic to this return to family life.⁸

Curiously enough, Rushdoony found younger people receptive and desirous for a trustee family and culture, enthusiastically devouring his *Institutes of Biblical Law* with its strong emphasis on the Biblical family. This was in stark contrast to older readers, who had a “strong distaste” to the “patriarchal” idea. He considered it a positive sign that a new generation was eager for a Biblical mandate and strong theological roots. He concludes:

7. *Ibid.*, 12.

8. *Ibid.*, 13.

The atomistic family has no future. The godly family commands the future. The future family is under God, the trustee of children, property, inheritance, welfare, and education. It governs the basic areas of social power in terms of God's law and grace.⁹

What Lies Ahead

The acceptance of the idea that there is an urgent need for the reinstatement of the trustee family is only the beginning. Rethinking *all* areas of life and thought from this perspective is the necessary consequence. That is why Chalcedon continues to uphold Christian education (whether in a day school or home-school setting) as a fundamental prerequisite for a future where God's Word is presupposed and all disciplines and professions are ordered and judged based on the commandments of God.

Future treatments of this very broad subject will examine the various aspects of modern life that need to be reviewed with the corrected vision of a return to a full-orbed commitment to doing things God's way.

9. Ibid.

2

THE WOMAN OF THE HOUSE

A COVENANTAL VOICE OF VICTORY

When I was a young girl, I would spend a lot of time day-dreaming about my future. With a bent for acting, I would envision myself as one of the five nominees for an Academy Award. Interestingly, I never pictured myself winning the award for “Best Actress.” Rather, I was always the proud recipient of the “Best Supporting Actress” award. I liked the idea of being in a supporting role, that character that enhanced the main actor’s performance. In the many plays and musicals I participated in during high school, I quickly learned that my greatest satisfaction did not come from holding “center stage.” I was drawn to the role of director or producer—the person who worked behind the scenes to manage and assist others in their performances.

I assumed that these were preferences peculiar to me as an individual. But after becoming a student of the Bible, I realized that these attributes were a major aspect of God’s original design of women in their participation in the dominion mandate. Eve was given to Adam to assist him in his calling under God and to help him in a supportive role, not take center stage. When Adam described Eve as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, he was responding to the most perfect gift he could imagine—a counterpart who completed him and strengthened him in the work God called him to do.

Thus, when God felt that Adam had proved himself by his obedience and by his responsibility, He “caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs (or, ‘took from the side of him’) ... and ... made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh...” This is a magnificent statement; and part of it is almost untranslatable because the word translated “this is now” is an idiom in the Hebrew which has meaning comparable to what we mean when we say, ‘I’ve got the beat. This is the rhythm of the music, the rhythm of my life that I have been waiting for.’ “Bone of my bone” means ‘the structure of my life.’ The skeleton is the structure of the body, that which supports the body; the body would be like that of a jellyfish without the skeleton. Adam says, “She is bone of my bones” (‘The structure of my being is the structure of her being’). “Flesh of my flesh” (‘The very life of me is the life of her; I find myself, I realize myself in terms of her’).¹

In today’s world, there is a decided push for women to prepare for careers outside the home as though that would be a step up for them. Beware of those who wish to destroy the covenant family by marketing such lies to young girls and women. “You can be anything you want to be” is a refrain pounded into their psyches. Additionally, there is a concentrated effort to depict romance and mutual attraction as the basis for lasting marital bliss. This and more serve to sever the woman of the house from her position of confidant and adviser to her husband, and caregiver and teacher of her children. This tactic and strategy of the enemies of God has delivered a significant blow to the family.

From a Biblical standpoint, a woman completes a man and assists him as he fulfills the call God places on his life. It cannot be stressed enough that a man’s call and success is actually the calling and success of his family in terms of the dominion mandate. This can easily become male-centered if we limit the woman’s role to assisting her husband in his vocation. Rushdoony points out,

This brings up a very significant point, one very central to our time. From this, the first marriage, we have a pattern established which is to be the pattern of all marriage: since the woman is to be a help meet to the man in terms of his calling, mixed marriages religiously are from the Biblical perspective wrong. A Christian

1. Elizabeth Fellersen, Editor, *Toward a Christian Marriage* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1972), 15.

should not marry an unbeliever or one of another religion because a Christian to fulfill himself in terms of his calling must marry someone who is “a help as before him,” someone who mirrors that which he is. How can the woman be that mirror and have the community that comes from being the reflected image of the man if her background is so different from that which his is? They must have *a common faith*, or, according to the law of God, it is not a valid marriage.²

Proverbs 31 gives a thorough job description of how a virtuous woman goes about fulfilling her calling under God in the major role of supporting her husband and family. As the manager of the household, she is intimately involved in the concerns of all members and, truly, is the glue that holds the family together.

Why is this worthy woman described as more precious than rubies? Because a worthy woman knows the law of God and applies it to every area of her life³ and thought. That is the only reason she can self-consciously do good and not evil to her husband all the days of her life. What’s more, this covenantal woman rejoices in the future because she knows God’s Word and thoroughly believes the promises for obedience it contains (Deut. 28:1–14). Because daily she has her hands on the pulse of future generations, she can convey with her words and actions the victorious life that faithfulness produces. In short, dislodge the woman of the house from her God-given domain and the major covenantal voice proclaiming God’s victory is silenced.

Regarding Her Husband

Proverbs 18:22 states, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.” This has much more significance than being a sexual partner and the bearer of a man’s children. A wife’s role involves managing her household so that her husband can pursue his calling and be an active member of the community at large. There is a particular freedom that a man has

2. Ibid.

3. The training of daughters should focus on the Biblical underpinnings of all aspects of life so that even from an early age, they are trained to do good to their husbands years before they actually meet. Dressing modestly and behaving honorably guarantees stepping into marriage without anything that would bring dishonor to their husband and new family.

when he knows that his wife is making wise decisions with budgeting his income and caring for the children. In addition, when a wife concerns herself with educating her children and teaching them to behave well, a husband is not only freed from anxiety and worry about his family, but the witness of a well-disciplined family attests to his leadership skills.

Yet in today's world, the feminist mindset has claimed the high ground asserting that women need to unshackle themselves from domineering men. Rushdoony observes,

[I]n our culture most churches, because of their theology, expect God to serve man. Is it surprising, then, that women expect men to serve them? The whole world is turned upside-down. When you have men expecting God to serve them and women expecting men to serve them, you have social collapse.⁴

Social collapse is what we are witnessing today. Modern novels, movies, and television have hijacked covenantal marriage and turned it into the culmination of physical attraction. In addition, with the feminist perspective having shoved its way into all aspects of the culture, *real men* are depicted as buffoons or cads, with their primary focus centered on satisfying their sexual urges. Those who have ordered their lives on solid, Scriptural principles are often the object of persecution and prejudice in the workplace. As hard as this is to endure at times, the support of a godly wife and family enables the righteous to stand.

God's Word directs woman to function as the reflected image of man who was created in the image of God. This reflected image—his mirror image—allows him to find himself, not only in relationship to God but in terms of a woman.⁵ As a result, his union with her enhances his life. Rushdoony points out:

It does make a difference in the character of man when they become married. Insurance statistics bear this out: a young man pays a very high insurance as a driver until he marries; then it drops because he has assumed responsibility, he has become

4. Fellserson, 14.

5. It was never God's intent that the man would fulfill his dominion calling alone. God was waiting for Adam to establish himself in his calling before giving him a helper. God apparently wanted Adam to appreciate his need for a perfect counterpart—something he did not have with the animals.

stable, and he has, so to speak, found himself. At least this is true in sufficiently large numbers of cases to make a marked difference in insurance statistics.⁶

While the supportive assistance of the woman of the house has a positive impact on her husband, much of our cultural trouble today stems from the fact that there are too few men capable of serving as elders and leaders in their field of work. This leadership vacuum centers around unqualified men in terms of character and their Biblical illiteracy. As men and nations have relegated God's law to the distant past and proclaimed an age of grace apart from law, the entire framework for godly dominion falls apart, for lack of boundaries.⁷

One of the ancient boundaries that has been moved is the distinct roles God gives to the man and to the woman. When these roles are confused or merged, society suffers. Rushdoony states,

The family (fatherhood) is an important part of the man's calling, but it is not the central part. The family is central to the woman: her responsibility under God is her husband and then the family. Man's responsibility is broader: it is in terms of his work and his total calling under God. The family is a *part* of his responsibility but by no means his total responsibility; his goal is set in terms of his work, which he must view under God.⁸

Regarding Her Children

A mother loves her children, but this love should never be at the expense of stewardship for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. While a mother's love is very personal, she must never place her emotional and familial attachment above God's calling for her children. Mothers in general, and Christian homeschooling mothers in particular, need to view their children objectively, taking into consideration the talents, gifts, and inclinations that manifest themselves under their guidance and supervision. This means that the woman of the house needs to be about the business of education—in all spheres of life. She needs to focus on rearing

6. Fellserson, 14.

7. Pastor Mike O'Donovan of the Rock of Liberty Church in Fort Worth, TX observes that the world without God's law governing it is like a river without banks. Without banks, it ceases to be a river and instead you have a flood.

8. Fellserson, *Ibid.*, 16.

strong, confident, God-fearing individuals who will uncompromisingly take their place in adulthood, ready, willing and eager to proclaim the crown rights of Jesus Christ.

Although a mother does not produce salvation in her children, she must comprehensively teach her children that apart from Christ, there is no salvation. However, she needs to tie in the concept of salvation with victory to transmit the future orientation of the total deliverance Christ procured for His people.

Rushdoony explains,

The Greek word salvation, *soteria*, means deliverance, preservation, victory, and health, and it refers to material and temporal deliverance, as well as personal, national, temporal and eternal triumph. The Biblical doctrine of salvation is so clearly one of victory, that it must be emphatically stated that *salvation is not escape...*⁹

The goal of a Christian education is to prepare children for the victory that is theirs in Christ Jesus. Rather than attempting to escape the culture, covenant children should be taught that their inheritance through Christ mandates them to reign in life.

Children are a God-given inheritance for our conquest of the world for Christ. They are a means of subduing the earth and exercising dominion under the Lord. If we give our children to state or private schools which are not systematically Christian in all their curriculum, we are then giving the future to God's enemies, and He will hold us accountable for laying waste our heritage. We thus must have Christian schools and Christian homeschools for the Lord's children. *We* are commanded to "bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the LORD" (Eph. 6:4). This is a necessary step for that great consummation of God's will, announced beforehand for us in Revelation 11:15:

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.¹⁰

The Bible could not be clearer that God plans for His covenant people to reign on the earth. Thus, a fundamental aspect of

9. R. J. Rushdoony, *Salvation and Godly Rule* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, [1983] 2004), 1.

10. R. J. Rushdoony, *In His Service: The Christian Calling to Charity* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2009), 20.

the woman of the house's role in conveying this truth is to focus on communicating to her children their royal status under God.

Man was called to dominion (Gen. 1:26–28); he was called to establish his reign over the world under God. ... Christ... by His grace and the gift of righteousness, enables man to *reign in life*, i.e., in this life or world, and to “reign through righteousness unto eternal life,” i.e., in the life to come ... Christ's redemption means man's reign in time and in eternity. Very plainly, salvation means reigning. The rebellious slave is established in kingship. We are “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8:37) in Christ, because we are also kings. We cannot understand the full meaning of salvation if we separate it from the fact of *reigning*. Paul's multiple use of the word “reign” in Romans 5:17 and 21 makes clear the centrality of reigning in the doctrine of redemption. To defer the fact of reigning to the other world is a Manichaean separation of the world into two alien realms, one (the material) surrendered to one god, and the other (spiritual) reserved for the other god. The hostility of many to the idea of victory in the material world is evidence of Manichaean leanings. St. Paul is emphatic: we “reign in life.” The Biblical doctrine of salvation requires it.¹¹

We live in a world that does not bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ and that offers up many counterfeit religions. Sadly, this is also true within the church as many gravitate toward worldly perspectives and solutions. That is why it is imperative for the woman of the house to know and understand the law of God in all its subtleties, while imparting discernment along with knowledge and understanding. A Christian household should look categorically different from its pagan counterpart because of a Scriptural vision for victory. Those who have the assurance of salvation are confident and triumphant people.

When St. Paul declared, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16), he meant that, because salvation is entirely the work of the sovereign and omnipotent God, the proclamation of that good news could cause him neither shame nor embarrassment. His gospel was not the uncertain and possible work of an impotent or struggling god, but the absolute and certain work of the eternal, triune, and omnipotent Maker of heaven and earth. To preach such a certainty would bring Paul no shame or embarrassment: God's saving power is sure.¹²

11. R.J. Rushdoony, *Salvation and Godly Rule*, 620.

12. *Ibid.*, 9–10.

The woman of the house has a pivotal role with each new member who comes into the family. Since she is preparing a future ambassador, soldier, and joint-heir with Christ, she should instill in the child an attitude and emphasis of personal responsibility. A whining and complaining child is not to be tolerated. Correction should be immediate and an uncompromising effort must be exerted to help the child gain self-discipline, with God's grace, and achieve victory over his sinful tendencies. This swims against the tide of the escapism that is so prevalent in modern culture as parents dote on children rather than call them to a high standard.

Rushdoony explains,

[The] pagan concepts thus cannot offer salvation, not only because they have no God nor universe in which full and assured victory is possible, but also because they have a defective view of man and sin. In paganism, man seeks an escape from his problems, or a retirement into sensual bliss from the world's work and responsibility. By failing to recognize his rebellion against the sovereign God as his essential problem as well as his sin, pagan man wants not salvation but escape. To admit the real problem, his sin, is to admit that there is no way of escape, only the way of salvation through God's regenerating grace.

Moreover, the failure of paganism to offer salvation is not accidental. It is a part of the pagan refusal to understand; it is a willful rejection of the truth of God.¹³

The worthy woman described in Proverbs 31 is future oriented, believing wholeheartedly that salvation means victory. She can reach out to the poor and needy because she knows she has something of eternal value to offer them. She is not afraid of a bleak economic forecast because she knows that the sovereign God delights in giving His children good things. Strength and honor are her clothing because she lives in the environment of God's law. She can rejoice in time to come. In short, she is uniquely positioned to offer her husband and children a safe haven where God's law is paramount and God's victory proclaimed.

13. *Ibid.*, 5–6.

3

PROTECTION AND COVERING

God's law-word can be viewed either as a burden with hundreds of do's and don'ts that stifle the creativity and freedom of individuals, OR as a blessing given by God to man within the context of families as the standard by which to glorify Him and enjoy Him. Believers should view it from the second perspective.

In Scripture God has differentiated the roles of men and women. Despite attempts to blur the distinctions between the sexes, God's Word makes it clear that men have been given the responsibility to lead (headship) and women have been given the task to assist them in their calling.

If we are going to take the Word of God seriously as a faith for all of life, then we must do an inventory of our lives and determine which areas have been placed outside of God's domain (whether intentionally or unintentionally). We also must honestly examine whether we have allocated some actions or responsibilities to the "important" column and others to the "less important" or "inconsequential" categories. If we truly are to be the salt that hasn't lost its savor, or the light not hid under a bushel, then we would do well to ensure that we have not only embraced God's directives (no matter how big or small they may seem to us), but also unearthed areas in our own lives that have been in direct contradiction to clearly

ordained elements of scriptural living. I submit that there are more areas than most of us would care to admit, where we have been ignorant of God's requirements OR have been willing to remain "inconsistent" in adhering to them or trying to obey them in the first place.

I can hear the cries of legalism and works salvation. But I'm not discussing the way in which we become justified with God. We are justified by the act of God's grace, which recognizes Christ's death and resurrection as applying to us. I am talking about how our sanctification (growth in grace) constitutes our response to living out God's definitions of right and wrong, righteousness and unrighteousness, blessings and cursings, and so on.

Outdated or Relevant?

Years ago, my husband and I would make our monthly (sometimes weekly) jaunts to Vallecito to hear Dr. Rushdoony preach. We would have regular Sunday afternoon discussions with him in his living room along with his wife, Dorothy, and any other guests who happened to be visiting. I always intently asked questions about those portions of Scripture I "knew" didn't apply any longer and was eager for Rush to help me understand why I was correct in my thinking. He provided me with no justification to assume that God's directives were things of the past, no matter how inconsequential they seemed to me. Rather, he would give an answer, provide a Scripture reference to back it up, and then add, "Someone should really write about this. This is an area that needs more development." This essay is an effort to further develop a Biblical understanding of one of those issues.

After the creation account, concluding with the creation of Adam, the Bible proceeds to define the purpose and role of the woman. She was to be his complement—providing aspects of personality and gifts that matched up well with his. Physically, the bodies of men and women clearly show an intentional design that makes them compatible with the task of producing progeny that God assigned to them.

Likewise, in matters of size, strength, inclinations, and temperament the differences in the sexes was a deliberate act of creation

and one that was designed to further the Kingdom of God.¹ Men are stronger and more suited to the tasks of combat, hunting, defense, protection, and leadership.² Much like the outside of a building, God has instilled in men to be that which stands in constant protection of that which is inside—providing a barrier between the outside and the inside. Women, on the other hand, are more concerned and gifted in the areas of childbearing, comfort, edification, and beautification, similar to the inside of a structure that serves as a pleasant and suitable environment for family life and nurturing. A building without insides is an empty shell; rooms without outside protection are short-lived and vulnerable to predators and thieves. Thus, from the outset, the roles of men and women were defined and established to ensure the furtherance of the Kingdom by means of the dominion mandate to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.

Assault on the Weaker Vessel

Opponents of Biblical Christianity like to paint a picture of the caveman-mentality when it comes to describing what the Bible says about men and women. Not unlike their father the devil, they seek to attack the most vital stronghold of Christian civilization—the Biblical trustee family. By promoting egalitarianism, and perpetuating the “battle of the sexes,” they stimulate a conflict of interests rather than a harmony of interests. Their assault undermines a woman’s most important role—raising and educating God’s children. By succumbing to the lure of outside careers and personal fulfillment, women are abdicating the royal role of wife and mother and transferring it to paid surrogates.

Our Lord said, “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber” (John 10:1). In the Garden, Satan avoided a direct assault on the “door,” Adam, and sought entry through “some other way,”

1. See Chris Ortiz’s article on the Kingdom, “The Kingdom-Driven Life: Discovering God’s Larger Purpose and Our Place in It,” *Faith for All of Life*, March/April, 2008.

2. When Adam was created, there was no need of combat or hunting. Defense and protection probably did come into his calling at that point, but in a nonviolent way. The calling of the male as head and the female as helpmeet were normative in a non-fallen world.

Eve. She was clearly a weaker point of entry (1 Pet. 3:7), but that's why the Bible describes the Fall of man as the "sin of Adam" (Rom. 5:12, 14), and not Eve. It was Adam's responsibility to "dress and keep" the Garden (Gen. 2:15) and that included his wife. Yet Eve was still culpable in that she allowed herself to be deceived (1 Tim. 2:14). The end result was a disastrous course for world history that is only remedied by Christ's redemption and a deliberate reversal of the original sin on the part of man, i.e., the marriage relationship must be reconstructed along Biblical lines.

God never has left mankind without a witness to that which pleases Him and obtains His blessings. Throughout the pages of both Old and New Testaments, there are provisions that serve to safeguard the interests of the trustee family by acknowledging the vulnerability of women and establishing the protective responsibilities of fathers and husbands. Rushdoony has this to say:

We understand ... why a married woman as well as unmarried daughters carry the name of the husband and father. They signify thereby that they are under his care and authority. It is a protective covering.³

A pertinent portion of Scripture on the subject of vows can be found in Numbers 30:1–16. It is an example of a law given by God to protect the interests of the family by giving the husband and father the responsibility to examine and approve the dealings of his wife and daughters in matters where they may have been moved with gratitude to do something for, or give something to, the Lord's work above and beyond what the law requires.

Rushdoony elaborates,

This obviously is a law of far-reaching implications because here alone in the law do we find that statement, "And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel" (v. 1); usually Moses is commanded to speak to the children of Israel. Obviously, we have a law of importance and different in kind.⁴

Much is important in this passage, but for the sake of this discussion Rushdoony's comment on the role of husbands and fathers is highlighted:

3. R. J. Rushdoony, *Deuteronomy* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2008), 79.

4. R. J. Rushdoony, *Numbers* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2006), 340.

The reason why the husband or father had oversight where a wife or daughter made a vow was to prevent rash vows which, however well-intended, could adversely affect family life. This meant that the head of the household had to be responsible, not only to annul rash vows, but to avoid himself any rash vows that would harm the family.⁵

How can we presume that the New Testament contradicts or overrides these God-given directives that preserve and uphold the institution of the family? Yet, it is the Biblical trustee family, of all the institutions that God has ordained, that is continually assaulted (either directly or indirectly) by both church and state—the family’s authority, preferences, and jurisdiction are regularly challenged. This is so true in our day, that the portion of Scripture cited above is virtually unknown among professing Christians.

The church is often guilty of dealing with believers as autonomous units rather than within the context of family life—often approaching men, women, and children in isolation from their familial roles. The state, too, is not without guilt as it robs the loyalty of the children from their parents by means of the compulsory educational system, not to mention robbing the family wealth by means of inflation and excessive taxation.

New Testament Application

A look at the early church gives us a picture of the application of the covering commanded by God for women (either wives or daughters) by their husbands or fathers.

In chapter 7 of Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, he writes in direct response to a letter from them regarding fidelity, morality, and marriage. The apostle’s reply included a condemnation of fornication (v. 2), a remonstrance against individualism in a marriage (vv. 3–5), a recommendation of abstinence (vv. 7–8), and the problematic issue of having an unsaved spouse (vv. 10–16). It’s in this last matter that neither salvation nor the church sought to annul the institution of the family: an unbelieving husband remained the head of his believing wife, insofar as he was willing to remain in the marriage.⁶

5. Ibid., 344.

6. The unbeliever’s headship did not mean that the wife had to obey the husband when he wanted to lead her or the family into sin or outside the clear directives of the Scriptures.

This has far-reaching implications. From the outset, the church was not claiming jurisdiction over the family, but declared it was God's institution to support and uphold family life. In fact, it maintained that within the structure of marriage and family life, evangelism was most likely to find its good fruit, thereby encouraging new converts to stay married if the other spouse was willing. Even 1 Peter 3:1–6 instructs wives to be in subjection to husbands who obey not the Word, as a means of converting them. Paul never wavers from identifying the family as an institution under God rather than under the church. And an important distinction includes that wives are to be subject to their own husbands, *not* to any and every man. Thus, a wife's membership in the church never was intended to replace the authority of the husband as the family head.

Power on Her Head

In 1 Corinthians 11:1–15, Paul instructs men and women in their proper roles under God and in public worship.

1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.
2. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.
3. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.
4. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.
5. *But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.*
6. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.
7. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.
8. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.
9. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.
10. *For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.*
11. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.
12. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

13. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?
14. Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?
15. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. [*Emphasis added.*]

Despite how unpopular the entire subject of head coverings is today, it has a long and important history in the life of the church and Christian civilization in general. All one has to do is view films made earlier than the 1960s that contained church scenes and you will see women with their heads covered. I know from my own childhood that this was accepted practice, even if most did not recognize its origin.

Rushdoony comments on 1 Corinthians 11:10, “For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels,” and points out the seeming contradiction between Paul establishing a head covering as a sign of subordination and authority at one and the same time:

This seeming contradiction arises from the anarchic concept of authority which is so deeply imbedded in man’s sinful nature. All true authority is under authority, since God alone transcends all things and is the source of all power and authority. A colonel has authority because he is under a general, and his own authority grows as the power, prestige, and authority of those above him grow, and his unity with them in mind and purpose is assured. So too with the woman: Her subordination is also her symbol of authority.⁷

Think of the implications of a woman covering her head in worship within the context of Paul’s remarks:

1. Praying with her head covered prevents a woman from dishonoring her head (her husband).
2. By way of analogy, since it would be shameful for a woman to have her head shaved, likewise, she should cover her head in public worship.
3. Covering her head is a visual symbol of her being the “glory of the man” and under her husband or father’s authority as ordained by God.

7. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. I*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Craig Press, 1973), 347.

4. Because of this aforementioned relationship, a woman has (wears) power on her head, establishing that she lives and acts under authority. (This is much like the practice of nurses, policemen, and military personnel having a head covering that denotes they are under authority, and thus have power or jurisdiction in a particular area.)

Finally, Paul asks and answers the question, “[I]s it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?” By answering that nature itself testifies that men and women have differing roles and thus designated manners of dress and adornment, he is answering this question with a definitive “no.” The meaning seems straightforward: men dishonor their heads when they come to congregational worship with covered heads, and women do so when they fail to cover theirs.

There are any number of alternate explanations of this Biblical text, and one in particular which, although it doesn’t maintain the need for actual head coverings, does concur that God’s authority structure of male headship must be maintained.⁸ However, there are some published church standards that emphatically state that women must *not* cover their heads as a sign of submission and are liable to cause division and offense by doing so.⁹ If the authority for this statement comes from Scripture, then the passages on either side of this directive to women, admonishing men to pray without a covering on their heads, might be called into question as well. Furthermore, since Paul talks about some sort of covering, where is the teaching in the church today that does more than say “This doesn’t apply any longer”? In the very same portion of Scripture there are instructions regarding the administration of the Lord’s Supper. Are these to be taken as specific answers to problems of the Corinthian church and not applicable to our time?

8. See James B. Hurley, “Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women?: A Consideration of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b–36.” Hurley’s conclusions assert, “1) that the primary issue was the authority of husbands in relation to their wives as focused in the hair-style of wives at the worship service and 2) that Paul did not intend to silence women but rather to regulate their relation to their husbands as they charismatically prayed and prophesied.”

9. See *The Practice of Headcoverings in Public Worship*, issued by the Reformed Presbytery of North America, June 4, 2001.

Shortly before his death, I asked Dr. Rushdoony in a private conversation about the issue of head coverings for women and why it generated such division and discord among Christians. His answer was succinct. He said, “Because it is just a matter of obedience. There isn’t attached to it any other obvious benefit. You will see the beginnings of true revival when once again women have their heads covered in worship. It will mean you have a people desirous of obeying God completely.”

But I didn’t stop there with Rushdoony’s answer. After all, years before, he had commented that there were topics in Scripture that needed more scholarship and study. So my husband and I began to discuss this issue and see what, if anything, we were missing. It was my husband who finally identified that the sign of a woman covering her head in worship was a visible display that familial ties were not abandoned when families walked through the doors of a local church. Rather than become absorbed into the life of the church, this visible sign established the family as the first and foremost of the three major institutions (family, church, state) ordained by God. Herein lies the key to liberty in the Christian sense of the word to be nurtured and developed within the context of the Biblical trustee family.

Additionally, as the early church grew, there were many families where one spouse would come to faith before the other. What better sign that the church had no desire to rob a man of his wife¹⁰ or his daughters, than for women to have a visible representation that they were under the protection of husbands and fathers?

Because of the Angels

Many commentators differ when it comes to explaining the clause “because of the angels” in this text. Whether you accept the perspective that Paul is describing fallen angels or faithful ones, he is nonetheless emphatic that women should wear power on their

10. Note in pagan cultures, it was not uncommon for men desirous of another man’s wife to kill him so as to have the wife. Such were the cases in Genesis regarding Abraham and Sarah.

heads. Without settling the designation as to which angels are being referred to, we have to acknowledge Paul's emphasis.¹¹

Where Do We Go from Here?

A congregation consisting of women with covered heads is a testimony to God's creation order and a visual symbol of the high regard the Christian faith places on women. Biblically speaking, this is an obvious sign that a woman is under the care and protection of her husband or father (or some male relative in the case of death) and serves as a constant reminder to both women and men that women minister under authority (Proverbs 31), and do so with power—that power that derives itself from Him who owns the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory and delegates it to men in authority and women under their fathers and husbands.¹² This line of thought runs completely counter to modern thinking.

I can testify from my own experience that at the point in my Christian walk that I took this directive seriously, my efforts within my own family, in homeschooling leadership roles, and in Christian ministry reached new levels.¹³ If for no other benefit than as a testimony to myself, I was able to embark on existing and new opportunities for service within the context of being a woman under authority. The sign on my head continues to serve as a reminder that I live and breathe in terms of God's order and that I am in no way autonomous in any of my earthly relationships.

We constantly hear clamoring for strong family values and strengthening the family against the attacks from those outside the faith. Maybe it is time we examined how we have been party to disobeying God and abandoning the very symbol He has ordained to

11. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. I*, 347.

12. It is important to distinguish between the Christian covering of women and the Islamic covering of women. The covering of a Muslim woman certainly has nothing to do with power, but rather degradation. If you saw a Christian woman and a Muslim woman each with their heads covered, would you be able to tell the difference? Folks often comment when they see a woman with her head covered, "Is she a Muslim?" Under Islam a woman is covered because she is deemed a temptation and snare to men. Under Christianity, she is recognized as having full status as a redeemed person, albeit existing in an authority structure with the husband as the head. This relationship has been compared to a king and his prime minister.

13. It should be noted that *sola Scriptura*, not experience, must be the final guide in determining how we should live.

regularly and routinely picture the family as His most basic, fundamental institution. Maybe the greatest opposition to God's order for the family is unwittingly found within the very walls of the church.¹⁴

14. Some would challenge my premise and ask if all women immediately covered their heads in worship, would revival result? The question confuses the symbol with that which the symbol refers. I could ask likewise: if a woman removed her wedding ring, would she suddenly not be married? The symbol points to a reality of her being married. Likewise, the wearing of a veil during the marriage ceremony was a symbol of being under authority. The father brings the woman to the husband, and she is "given" in marriage. Thus, a transfer of authority takes place.

4

PARENTAL CONSENT

Parents today claim they face issues that earlier generations did not have to deal with. Consider the plight of parents who desire their daughters to dress in a modest, God-honoring fashion to preserve their virtue in preparation for covenantal marriage, only to be silenced because the children of pastors and elders sport tattoos, body piercings, and revealing and/or provocative clothing without comment or correction from their Christian parents. Or, the dilemma of a Christian homeschooling mom when she discovers that her preadolescent son has been exploring hard-core pornography websites, only to be told that, “Boys will be boys.”

Christians have been conditioned to make our message conform to Madison Avenue dogmas and doctrines. The modern church has taken its lead from advertising and marketing firms, believing this is the way to bring more people to Christ. By adopting the Madison Avenue approach to the Great Commission and evangelistic endeavors, the church has become more concerned with how it is viewed than the message it has been commissioned to preach.

The church cannot effectively address the important issues of our day because the law of God has been all but eradicated from Christian preaching. Instead of proclaiming, “Thus saith the

Lord,” we have focus groups, seeker surveys, psychological profiling, and a myriad of humanistic approaches to draw people in. Sad to say, modern congregations appear more like the studio audiences of an Oprah Winfrey or Dr. Phil program than a vibrant, God-honoring army.

We live in treacherous times. In the midst of this chaos, we have professing Christians who are more concerned about not offending the enemies of God than faithfully proclaiming the Word of God. The church has diluted the Great Commission by soft peddling the do’s and don’ts of a holy life because it no longer views God’s law as a light for the path and a lamp for the feet of the children of God.

A Line in the Sand

But how can Christians preach the law if they have not embraced the law? How can they embrace it, if they have been taught that the law is no longer relevant? If the law is no longer relevant, why should anyone bother with going to church or paying for a Christian education for his or her children? Moreover, if the Word is not faithfully and completely preached on Sunday, or taught throughout the curriculum Monday through Friday, why should anyone be surprised by our current societal malaise? Illegitimacy, sexual promiscuity, and an ever-increasing population of sexual predators all stem from an abandonment of God’s laws concerning sexual purity.

As Rushdoony points out, the law of God is a line in the sand. On one side, you have that which is pleasing to God. On the other, that which He disdains:

Every biblical law is concerned with holiness. All law creates a line of division, a separation between law-abiding and the law-breaking peoples. Without law, there can be no separation. The modern antipathy to and open hatred of law is a hatred of holiness. It is an attempt to destroy the line of separation between good and evil by abolition of law. However, because God is holy, law is written into the structure of all being; law cannot be abolished: it can only be enforced, if not by man, surely by God.¹

1. R. J. Rushdoony, “Holiness and the Law,” in *Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. 1* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1973), 88.

From the time my children were little (about seven to nine years old), I instructed them using the book of Proverbs as a commentary on God's law. We would go through the book chapter by chapter, sometimes only dealing with a few verses at a time. (I used to joke to my husband that in the process I was giving a sex education class to the children.) In Proverbs, codes of sexual conduct consistent with Biblical law are praised and encouraged, and those antithetical are denounced. Subjects like sexual enticement, falling prey to adultery (treason against the family), the dire consequences to health and happiness for failure to listen to one's parents (incorrigibility) are all laid out. Note that I instructed my children *before* they reached puberty and had hormonal issues and societal pressures to deal with. They were instructed that sexual activity was reserved for covenantal marriage and in that context was a great blessing of God. Because my husband and I were students of the Bible from a Reconstructionist perspective, we delivered our words with conviction and certainty.

Our children learned that on one side of the line you were an in-law and on the other you were an out-law. They knew that, in our household, we took God's law as law and that we wanted our family to live as trees planted by rivers of waters (Psalm 1), rather than have our feet firmly planted in mid-air.²

I've talked with many Christian parents who are reluctant to "come down too hard" on their children's dress or questionable viewing habits (magazines, video games, cable shows, etc.), afraid that they will alienate them if they do. However, they also complain that their children are already becoming alienated. Is it any wonder that the same "issues" that cause conflicts in a non-Christian home cause conflict in Christian families when Christians fail to know, apply, and teach God's laws? Telling young people that they should be holy and avoid sexual temptation, without highlighting, teaching, modeling, and enforcing the law of God, leaves those desirous of pleasing God in neutral gear.

2. This phrasing taken from the title of Francis Beckwith and Gregory Koukl's book *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air*.

How are they to be righteous when the standard for righteousness is neglected? Young listeners are fed a feel-good morality message by adults who are feverishly attempting to convince them that church is cooler than sex. As a result, many churches are paralyzed when dealing with the issue of modesty among its young women. Not wanting to step on the toes of a “babe in Christ” or risk being considered offensive, uncool, or prudish, the church remains silent regarding indecent apparel. Because the law of God is neglected, Christians are subjected to contaminating barrages from the secular world without any defense while the church congratulates itself for being tolerant and forbearing. Is it any surprise that “good girls” of the church dress like their peers in the culture?

The Dowry

Sexual conduct of church members often parallels that of the culture because the Biblical perspective of marriage and family has vanished from the pulpit and the home. Most today would say the basis of marriage (should one decide to go beyond cohabitation) is romantic love and compatibility. We have lost understanding of the jurisdiction God gives to the Biblical trustee family as the primary institution established for godly dominion. Thus, factors that are prerequisites for covenantal marriage (virginity, dowry, parental approval) are downplayed or ignored as historical antiques.

When most consider the dowry, scenes from *Fiddler on the Roof* come to mind with a father selling his daughters in order to get them married. This model is a total opposite of the Biblical principle. Rushdoony comments:

The European dowry is a reversal of the Biblical principle: the girl's father provides it as a gift to the groom. This had led to an unhealthy situation with respect of marriage and the family. Girls become, in such a system, a liability. In the 14th and 15th century Italy, “Fathers came to dread the birth of a girl-child, in view of the large dowry they would have to provide for her, and every year the prices in the marriage-market rose.” This led to a virtual destruction of the family, whereas the Biblical dowry strengthened the family. The groom wanted the highest price before accepting a girl, and the father shopped for someone who would not bankrupt him by his demands.³

By contrast, the Biblical dowry system elevated the status of a woman as one for whom a man would lay down his life. Again, Rushdoony's comments are insightful:

The dowry was an important part of marriage. We meet it first in Jacob, who worked seven years for Laban to earn a dowry for Rachel (Gen. 29:18). The pay for this service belonged to the bride as her dowry, and Rachel and Leah could indignantly speak of themselves as having been "sold" by their father, because he had withheld from them their dowry (Gen. 31:14–15). It was the family capital; it represented the wife's security, in case of divorce where the husband was at fault. If she were at fault, she forfeited it. She could not alienate it from her children. There are indications that the normal dowry was about three years' wages. The dowry thus represented funds provided by the *father of the groom*, or by the groom through work, used to further the economic life of the new family. The dowry was thus the father's blessing on his son's marriage, or a test of the young man's character.⁴

This system worked to include the family of the bride and the family of the groom. Rushdoony makes an interesting point:

The Hebrew word for bridegroom means "the circumcised," the Hebrew word for father-in-law means *he who performed the operation of circumcision*, and the Hebrew word for mother-in-law is similar. This obviously had no reference to the actual physical rite, since Hebrew males were circumcised on the eighth day. What it meant was that the father-in-law ensured the fact of *spiritual circumcision*, as did the mother-in-law, by making sure of the covenantal status of the groom. It was their duty to prevent a mixed marriage. A man could only marry their daughter, and become a bridegroom, only when clearly a man under God.⁵

Since the woman's parents were to secure a godly husband for her, they had to be equally certain that their daughter was a godly match. Ensuring that their daughter was pure was of utmost necessity in being able to negotiate a good match, for the Bible established a greater provision for a virgin than for a woman who was not.

With so much at stake, a father would be foolish to allow a daughter to do anything that would impugn her reputation or status as a virgin. Dressing with pronounced cleavage or with a bare

3. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, 177.

4. *Ibid.*, 176–177.

5. *Ibid.*, 344.

midriff would be indicative of impurity or one heading in that direction. In today's culture, fathers have abandoned their Biblical trustee role and allowed their daughters to look more like whores in training than pure, godly women.

The Tokens

However, reputation and outward appearance were not sufficient. God has placed within a woman's body evidence of her sexual purity in the form of a membrane called the hymen. A woman's first sexual encounter is accompanied by a flow of blood when this membrane is ruptured. Thus, a woman's *tokens of virginity*⁶ would be the evidence that she was a virgin and rightly merited the dowry for a virgin. Biblical law outlines what recourse a man had if he discovered he had been misled on his wedding night and the recourse if a false accusation was rendered by the husband about his wife.

13. If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,

14. And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid:

15. Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate:

16. And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her;

17. And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

18. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him;

19. And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.

6. The parents kept these tokens for the very purpose of being able to refute a false accusation against their daughter. The 1983 movie *Yentl*, although difficult to watch in almost every way, includes a scene where the main character (a woman pretending to be a man in order to learn the Talmud) somehow agrees to marry and intentionally drips wine on the bedsheets on the wedding night to produce tokens of virginity.

20. But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel:

21. Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. (Deut. 22:13–21)

Rushdoony comments on this text:

This is not a popular text with feminists because it so clearly gives priority to the family *and* to the parents. The father in particular is seen as centrally important, and the matter of *honor* is stressed.

The seriousness of the matter is seen by the fine cited (v. 19) ... This fine of 100 shekels of silver was virtual confiscation of an estate. (A shekel was a weight of silver, not a coin.) Obviously, the honor of a family and its daughter could not be lightly impugned. This was not the only penalty. The husband making a false accusation was also to be chastised or beaten (v. 18). To question the honor of a family and its daughter was not something done casually or frequently. The man making the false accusation was not killed because he had to support the wife whose honor he had questioned.⁷

Thus, the reputation of a woman was so highly valued that slandering her brought severe consequences to her husband. Rushdoony notes that the penalty was twice as severe as the fine for seduction in verses 28–29. How tragic it is that today women view themselves so cheaply that they slander themselves by their dress and demeanor.

Today the dating activities of most young people fly in the face of the Biblical safeguards for loss of virtue. Chaperoning and family-integrated activities are deemed remnants of an older, primitive era. Thus, accusations of rape are often difficult to prove when a woman has a history of fornication. However, most would be surprised to discover that Biblical law covers that subject as well.

23. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

24. Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he

7. R. J. Rushdoony, *Deuteronomy* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2008), 332.

hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

25. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die:

26. But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:

27. For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her. (Deut. 22:23–27)

Contrary to modern “wisdom,” a woman is directed by Scripture to resist vigorously the attacks of a rapist or risk being considered to have consented to the rape.⁸ This would do much to eradicate instances of women attempting to cover up their fornications with charges of rape, not to mention to encourage fathers to be more aware of the activities of their daughters.

Additionally, Exodus 22:16–17 covers the case of seduction:

16. And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.

17. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

Rushdoony explains that this case,

... has to do with the seduction of an unbetrothed virgin. In Deuteronomy 22:25–29, we have the law of rape, but in this instance the word used is “entice.” Although the girl participates in the act, the responsibility still rests primarily on the male. In Biblical law, the greater the responsibility the greater the culpability.

Without any qualification whatsoever, the guilty man must pay the virgin “the dowry of virgins.” The amount is not specified here, but in Deuteronomy 22:29 we are given the amount, fifty shekels of silver, a very large amount in those days.

This dowry is to be paid whether or not he marries the girl. Seduction was thus too costly to be commonplace in times when the law was kept.

8. Note that *Roe v. Wade* highlighted the circumstance of “Jane Roe” as the victim of rape resulting in pregnancy, when in actuality Norma McCorvey later admitted that she had not been raped, but was encouraged to say so in order to bring a test case to the Supreme Court. In addition, the case of the charges brought against students at Duke University also proved to be false, unsubstantiated rape charges.

Whether or not a marriage followed depended on the girl's father. If he "utterly refused" the man as a son-in-law, the dowry still went to the girl. Since a subsequent suitor also paid some kind of dowry, the girl went into her marriage well endowed.

This law stresses the priority of the father over both his daughter and her possible husband. It was his duty to protect his daughter and to ensure a good marriage for her.⁹

Dangerous Explorations

Today, many young men explore the "realities" of sex by pornographic magazines or websites and through television and movies that are all-too-readily available. If discovered by parents, it is often the mother who is shocked and the father who is mildly concerned. After all, isn't this just what boys do? If the law of God were preached and applied faithfully, there would be no such casual response. If a father truly understood that if his son were to violate a willing virgin that his son would owe the dowry (customarily in the neighborhood of three years' wages) and might not even then be allowed to marry her, the father might be much less willing to see his son get sexually aroused at too early a stage.¹⁰

You will not find any teaching in the New Testament that overturns these laws regarding sexual relations. The answer to the promiscuity of young people, rampant illegitimacy, murders of thousands of unborn children, and prevalent sexual perversions is faithfulness to God's law. It is high time Christian fathers reclaim their Biblically ordained jurisdiction and responsibility and once again embrace the trusteeship given them by God.

9. R. J. Rushdoony, *Exodus* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2004), 315.

The subsequent suitor referred to in the second paragraph above would be advised that he was not marrying a virgin, and thus, the required dowry amount he would need to pay would be less, chastity being a valued trait in a prospective bride. Rather than a "damaged goods" mentality, it pointed to the fact that this person had failed to demonstrate good judgment in the past and that reality followed her into a marriage. Therefore, rather than being better endowed than a woman who remained pure until marriage, this sum of money was there to help the foolish girl. It was far from a reward.

10. Pornography has so many ramifications. In his book, *Noble Savages: Exposing the Worldview of Pornographers and Their War Against Christian Civilization*, R. J. Rushdoony demonstrates that in order for modern man to justify his perversion, he must reject the Biblical doctrine of the fall of man. If there is no fall, then it follows that all that man does is normative. This is the philosophy behind pornography.

5

EQUIPPING PARENTS FOR KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT

Why aren't more Christian parents educating their children at home when the public school system continues to undermine the family, sexualize the students, and deceive them about the very reason for their existence? The reasons are legion.

For some, it is a fear of the state. They dread the potential knock at the door by a social worker or police officer coming to take their children away. Others buy into the lie that their children will become socially inept and developmentally challenged if they don't rub elbows with children who aren't taught to love God and keep His commandments. Others convince themselves that if they don't send their children as evangelists into the great harvest field of the public school system, they are denying the Christian faith and the Great Commission. This Arminian tendency results in the crowd changing the Christian child rather than the Christian child changing the crowd. Still others have a more basic fear—one that I encounter all too often in my labors as a homeschooling consultant.

“I Don't Think I'm Qualified to Homeschool”

“The public school system is staffed with thousands of credentialed teachers and administrators. How can I as a mother teach

my children properly without a degree in education? Won't they suffer academically?"

This is what I hear from many concerned parents. What they're missing, however, is what's at stake. And what's at stake is the future—their future godly generations as well as the future of the Kingdom. When they understand this, there is a greater possibility they'll take the needed steps to begin teaching their children at home or find a Christian day school that teaches the whole counsel of God. When they understand what hangs in the balance, they'll realize that not only are they more than qualified—they are commanded to teach their children.

R. J. Rushdoony articulates the issue in his unmatched study on *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*:

Because education means the training of the generations to come in the basic values, goals, and standards of a society, control of education is a central key to power ... To control the future requires the control of education and of the child. Hence, for Christians to tolerate statist education, or to allow their children to be trained thereby, means to renounce power in society, to renounce their children, and to deny Christ's lordship over all of life.¹

Christian parents who take the Bible seriously are “training the generations to come.” That's why the state so desperately wants to monopolize the education of children, and why it puts forward the propaganda surrounding credentials and accreditation. The intended purpose is for parents to be too intimidated to fight the system and too demoralized by their alleged inadequacy.

This is a misplaced intimidation. Fear is reserved for God alone, not man, and not the state. Our concern, as Christian parents, should be whether or not we are pleasing God in something as important as the education of our children. But parents have an uphill battle because pastors and denominations also endorse statist education. Just consider the annual refusals by the “conservative” Southern Baptist Convention to allow the proposals by Bruce Shortt to reach the floor for vote.²

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1981), 158.

2. See Lee Duiigon, “SBC Caves: No ‘Exodus’ from California Schools,” June 16, 2008, www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2863.

Christian parents must be taught the truth about the state and accreditation. The most important point is that it is God who qualifies someone for the role of teaching His children, and it is His Word that certifies. Rushdoony states this succinctly:

In Scripture, it is the prophetic ministry of God's law-word which accredits or certifies, or denounces and places under a ban, all offices of state, and entire nations as well.³

Since the state lacks the divine authority to certify parents to teach their children, parents should not be tempted to pull back from their Biblical mandate. If they are, they might consider a powerful lesson gleaned from the life of the prophet Daniel and his confrontation with statist control over the application of his faith.

Some Things Are Worse Than the Lion's Den

What preceded Daniel's stay in the lion's den? He had been trained in Babylon, yet he and his Hebrew companions did not shy away from their identity as Hebrews. They remained faithful to the training they had received from their parents. God rewarded their obedience. As a result, Daniel and the three young Hebrew men demonstrated savvy in dealing with sensitive and important issues and were elevated to positions of power. Daniel rose to the highest levels of government service and was above repute in the execution of his duties. He was faithful, so much so that the only accusation his enemies could make about him was that he was faithful to the law of his God.

5. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

6. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

(Dan. 6:5-7)

3. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 20.

If you think about it, they were asking for something far less than what is demanded in our modern statist school system. Daniel's enemies were asking for a moratorium on Daniel praying for thirty days. Just thirty days. What is required of Christians who send their children to state schools has no cutoff date—they are forbidden to vocally honor their Lord and Savior for ten months out of the year, Monday through Friday from eight o'clock until three o'clock daily. Additionally, if they play sports, they are prohibited, in many cases, from asking God's blessings for safety during a sporting event. When a Christian student attains the highest honors because of academic achievement, he is denied the right to acknowledge and credit his Lord and Savior for that success. Most parents of Christian children in public schools accept this silencing without question for the twelve years their Christian children attend statist schools. If they possessed even a mustard seed of wisdom, they would remove their children from this horrible predicament and fulfill God's requirements regarding the nurture and admonition of their children.

Daniel refused to be fearful of the consequences of faithfulness. He had a lot to lose. He had a privileged position with the king; he had status in the Babylonian community. He had wealth. He could have justified obedience to the king's evil edict by saying, "What will my brother and sister Hebrews do if I am no longer in a position to help them?" Why did he force the issue and jeopardize all the good he could do for God in the position he had?

As a man in a position of authority who had to make decisions that would affect the lives of a nation, he also knew that he was a man under God's authority. The wiles of a few enemies were not sufficient cause for him to give up his identity or his lifeline to the Source of his success and power (Dan. 6:10). Daniel was about furthering the Kingdom of God, despite the protests of his detractors.

Christian parents are constantly in predicaments like Daniel's. A judge or legislature may determine that children are owned by the state and require that parents cede to the state that which belongs to God alone. But like Daniel, Christian parents need to remember the source of their strength and their reason for existence. Rushdoony's prophetic words are once again helpful:

But man was created, not by the state, but by God, and man belongs, therefore, not to the state but to God. Children are a gift and an inheritance from God, given by God and to be committed to God by faith and godly nurture and education. No man owns his child, even though the child is committed to him by God. For a man to claim ownership of his children is not only morally wrong but also especially offensive. How much more wrong it is for the state to claim ownership of both child and man!

The basic answer to this socialism is that children belong to God, and all men, as God's creatures, are God's property. We had better, then, place ourselves under God's law and liberty, and enjoy the prosperity of His blessing and grace, or we shall find ourselves and our children groaning under the slavery of socialism.⁴

Liberty under God

Many Christians have a faulty theology of the family. They fail to realize the immense power God delegates to parents. Rushdoony states:

Biblical law places power and authority into the hands of the parents, especially the father, and, as long as the family has liberty, liberty based on power of property, the parents have authority. The primary purpose of the inheritance tax has been to destroy this parental power; the total financial gain to the state by means of inheritance taxes is small. Similarly, transfer of power over education, income, and property from the family to the state has undercut parental power and authority.⁵

Too many Christian parents today manifest a decided fear of the liberty God has given them, revealing a fragmented and compartmentalized theology of sovereignty. The questions continue: How long do I have to spend on each subject? Do I need to teach all subjects every day? When do I have to teach American history? My answer usually baffles my bright-eyed, albeit scared, mothers and fathers, "That's up to you. Those are the sort of determinations you as the parents make." At first they are sure they haven't been understood and urge me to *tell them what to do*.

Sadly, once I've gotten them to see that God gave their children to them to rear and that they are running the show rather than the state, they immediately want to give me the power and

4. Rushdoony, *Bread upon the Waters* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1974), 37–38.

5. Rushdoony, *Law and Liberty* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1984), 71.

jurisdiction to dictate to them how they should conduct their homeschool. Based on God's mandate to them, *they* specifically need to establish a Biblical world and life view before they can establish a mission statement and purpose for their homeschool. Their personal goals, the course of study, the curriculum choices, and the extracurricular activities will all fall into place once they've embraced their charge from God.

It is important to emphasize that homeschooling (and Christian education in general) is a means to an end, rather than an end unto itself. All decisions regarding professions and occupations need to be evaluated in terms of the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. In other words, the measuring device for all pursuits needs to be *how does this activity work toward building or furthering the Kingdom?* If the answers aren't apparent at the early stages, the course of study should include a solid foundation in the basics with an eye to providing students with a broad overview of all subject areas in terms of God's law-word. Talents, inclinations, and opportunities will manifest themselves as the student matures, thereby providing direction.

Gateway to the Soul

Of all the areas R. J. Rushdoony could have focused his attention, Christian education, under the supervision of the Christian family, was foremost. Why? Because he knew that education is the gateway to the soul. Teach children they are evolved apes, and that is how they will act. Teach them that they are made in the image of God and are required to adhere to His law-word, and they will act accordingly. Yet, Christian education is not something that should be undertaken without training. Fortunately, the same course of study that allows Christian parents to live life to God's glory is the precise course of study that will bring accreditation from God. Rushdoony hits the nail on the head:

We accredit ourselves by the Lord's sovereign word, and we require all things to be accredited by it.⁶

6. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 23.

Christian parents who want to ensure that their children have God-centered instruction need to school themselves as they school their children. Study of Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law* (to grasp the nature of God's law-word and its application to everyday life) and then utilizing his *Systematic Theology* (to see the law's application across various disciplines of life and thought) are necessary concurrents to textbook and syllabus choices. All of the titles available from Chalcedon on education along with the host of Rushdoony's sermons available in CD and MP3 format can serve as a homeschooling school of education for the homeschooling parent/teacher.

Rather than wasting time, effort, and financial resources to become "credentialed" in the eyes of the godless state, Christian parents should prepare for warfare with the powers and principalities that seek to overthrow the Kingdom of God and that want their children to aid in the process. By fulfilling the mandate to teach and nurture their children under God, Christian parents will be storming the gates of hell, which according to Scripture, will not prevail against them. This is not merely a turf war. This is the self-conscious fulfillment of our calling as members of the body of Christ.

Chalcedon Teacher Training Institute

It would be ideal if all parents had the sixteen years of training and mentoring that I received under R. J. Rushdoony and his wife, Dorothy. What a blessing it was to be able to read his books, listen to taped lectures, sit under his Sunday sermons, and then be able to clarify his meaning during hours of discussion. The same resources are available (except personal discussions with Rush) through the faithful work of the Chalcedon Foundation. With minimal organizational effort and some financial backing, I believe a full-scale "Chalcedon Teacher Training Institute"⁷ could provide parents with resources to equip them to assume the responsibility to which the Bible calls them.

Such an institute could develop increased competency and direction in the Christian homeschool teaching community through assigned readings, lectures, and position papers and would further

7. The Chalcedon Teacher Training Institute (CTTI) has been in a piloting stage since 2008. Visit www.ctti.org for more information.

the competency of homeschool teachers in all of their educational endeavors, ensuring their ability to convey and maintain a Biblically consistent and orthodox worldview over every subject area.

A self-paced program could provide feedback and discussion from a mentor/instructor. Specific areas could be addressed to meet individual needs. Such an institute could allow the homeschool teacher to “remain on the job” while participating in the program. This would provide a more “hands-on” approach to the coursework, enabling the homeschool teacher to immediately apply what is learned to the real-life situations in the homeschool.

Parents who are currently homeschooling, new fathers and mothers, and those who will be parents in the future, are candidates for such a program designed to further the Kingdom of God. An effort could be made to provide networking assistance and informal internships with other homeschooling families, to solidify the concepts learned. Additionally, those preparing to teach in Christian schools could benefit greatly.

Trainees could be encouraged to interact with the material and formulate their own position papers, thereby preparing them to articulate their beliefs. Not only would this solidify their philosophy of education, it would also provide a strong foundation upon which to nurture their students and withstand the assaults of those opposed to educational freedom. At the completion of such a program, graduates would be ready to assume a mentoring role with other homeschooling teachers and be designated Master Teachers themselves.

This concept developed could take homeschooling to the next level by establishing a firm foundation in advancing the Kingdom.

The great missionary requirement of the days ahead is Christian schooling and institutions. This is in part Chalcedon's function. It must become a central area of activity for all Christians, and for their tithes, in the days ahead. The word of God through Isaiah is this: “[F]or the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). This God will accomplish, with or without us. Those who are not a part of God's purpose had better beware of the consequences of being indifferent to His ways.⁸

8. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. II: Law and Society*, (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1986), 117.

6

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

Once upon a time, there were children who were eager to learn to read. They wanted as much help as possible to be able to read wonderful books like the Bible. This was not surprising because these children watched and listened as their parents and older brothers and sisters looked at pages with small, black symbols on them and learned important ideas such as our duty to love and obey God and how Jesus Christ died on the cross to make atonement for His people. In fact, in many households, the reward for learning how to decipher this code was a Bible of one's own. These children did not work for test scores or scholarships. They just wanted to learn.

They read about faraway people and places and learned from other people's experiences. They had the chance to work with their parents and learn a trade. They were encouraged to learn God's Word and pray that God would show them the calling He intended for them. Their families would help them find opportunities to apprentice under others who shared the same calling God had placed on their lives. It was a system that worked for centuries.

Time passed and "experts" came along who informed parents that they were no longer capable of teaching their children. Sadly, many parents believed these "experts," and they began to get their

little boys and girls up early in the morning, five days a week, to travel to a place where there were other boys and girls their own ages. The needs of the individual child did not matter; each had to do what all the other children did. It was difficult at first for them to give their children over to other people for six hours a day, but the mothers eventually got used to it and sought for meaningful things to do with their spare time. Some went back to school or got a job to feel useful and important.

As children progressed through the different grades, they lost much of their enthusiasm for learning. Instead of being excited about learning new things, they merely finished their homework. They liked Saturdays and Sundays best because they did not have to go to school. They also liked the summer months because school was not in session. Some completely forgot that there was a time in their lives when learning was fun and they could not wait to learn new things. It was a good thing TV and video games were invented because kids needed to do things that did not have to do with learning.

As the experts continued their experiment, they decided that to be truly educated, children had to be in school for twelve years. (And if children went to preschool or kindergarten, both highly recommended, more than twelve years could be spent in getting an “education.”)

One would think that after all this time, students, now young adults, would be ready to do something productive. However, the experts thought otherwise. They thought four to six more years of even “higher education” were needed. So they convinced parents and young adults to work hard so they could get into good colleges. Students worked to get good grades and scores on standardized tests. Parents spent lots of time and money sending their children to special classes to help them pass tests. They paid people to help them write essays and fill out applications to get into the best schools.

The journey did not necessarily end after these years of undergraduate education. The experts kept moving the finish line. Before long, there were two or three more years added to the journey. By the time many young adults finished the course, they

were exhausted and most often had a lot of debt because it is costly to be a perpetual student. Some were so glad to be finished that they hardly ever picked up a book again.

According to the projections of the experts, all of this schooling should have produced smarter people, people who were loyal to their family and country, and productive members of the work force, living responsibly within their means and eager to become mothers and fathers themselves. But that is not what happened. Instead, they abandoned much of what their fathers and mothers had taught them about loving Jesus Christ and keeping His commandments. They decided that institutions like marriage were old-fashioned and out-of-date. They lived as though they were entitled to the luxuries of life without having to work for them. They learned new ways to make phony promises to each other and swindle each other financially. Moreover, when they finally finished all their schooling, it was not always easy to get a job. After having been students for so long, they did not know how to discipline themselves to get up on time and report to a job. They began to like the political leaders who promised them something for nothing.

I wish I could say there was a successful conclusion for these people. But because so many of the graduates of these schools ended up nothing more than fools, they, their families, their communities, and their nations ended up selfish, burdened by debt, and enslaved.

Fortunately, when the experts began pontificating, a good number of people asked, "What does the Bible say about sending children to government schools?" Because God mandates that His little children have a Christian education, these parents understood that they were commanded by God to oversee the education of their children. They determined to teach their children from God's Word, instructing them that every area of faith and life was subject to the law-word of God.

Children given godly instruction grew up well and managed to attain a good report almost everywhere they went. Unfortunately, their parents ran out of vision. Although they could see that

their children learned more and applied their learning much better than their public-schooled counterparts, they decided to follow the path laid out by those experts for higher education. Many sent their children off to colleges that systematically worked to dislodge professing Christians from their faith in Christ.

How will it end for these people?

Vocation vs. Ambition

Too many Christian parents, who have begun a good work in their children, nullify much of their effort when they blindly assume that the only next step available is to send their children off to college. Most colleges embrace the very philosophies of education that homeschooling parents have shielded their children from in their early education. Many parents assume that having a degree from a college or university will insure that the child can get a good job and have a good life. This becomes the ambition for the parent and for the child. But God has a higher goal for His children, as Rushdoony points out:

Vocation allies itself with the Lord and places itself under the every word of God (Matt. 4:4). A vocation is the result of regeneration and faithful obedience. It sees freedom as obedience to the Lord. Ambition is marked by a lust for power and preeminence. The ambitious man seeks to use God and man to gain his own ends.

The ambitious man assents to the great temptation and says, "I shall be my own god, determining or establishing for myself, in terms of my will, what constitutes good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). The man with a calling says with our Lord, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

The ambitious man, because power is his god, will slaughter kulaks, persecute Jews, capitalists, whites, blacks, or workers, exploit all men, treat youth as fodder, and generally dedicate himself to what, in terms of God's law-word, is sin and only sin, however noble a cause he may ascribe to his actions. (Most sins come labeled with a noble rationale; sinning is usually called liberation; and murders in the cause of sin are usually called victories over the enemies of the people, the state, or the Great Cause.)¹

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 159–160.

Parents should instill in their children early on that God has a distinct call on their lives and that education must be pursued to develop that calling or vocation. The pursuit of calling, or vocation, provides the goal for education. The student prepares for his place in the Kingdom of God, doing the work that God has called him to do. All work becomes a sacred duty, offered to God in loving pursuit of the growth of His holy Kingdom. That is what makes the homeschool such a fertile ground for growing responsible, competent individuals. For it is only through a truly Biblical education that one can learn to seek first the Kingdom of God. At what point is it proper to place children in environments that do not seek this holy goal?

The Lure of Credentials

Too often, professing Christians are more impressed with “credentials” from secular, God-hating “prestigious” schools than they are the production of godly character. Do graduates from secular or compromised colleges and universities graduate with wisdom? How can it truly be called “higher learning” if the course of study does not include the teaching of God’s law? Without the fear of God, it is unbiblical to call it education. Yet many fall into the idolatrous trap of seeking the world’s credentials to validate their worth. Many Christian parents surrender to the “necessity” of a secular college degree because those who hold those degrees are more marketable than those who do not.

Another excuse for sending Christian children to college is the need for young people to have “the college experience,” which often includes moving away from home and family. This is not the model for building a Biblical trustee family. It is foolish to have these young adults abandon their familial responsibilities at a time when they are ready to be productive assets to their families. In the case of large families, it is squandering resources to send your most highly trained members away. Moreover, the “college experience” is much more about drinking binges, sexual promiscuity, Marxist political and social theory, environmentalism, and the deification of other ideologies. These are the kinds of “experiences” the Christian should want no part of. The Scripture teaches:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Cor. 6:14–18)

One would think that twelve years of schooling under the supervision of highly trained, credentialed teachers would be enough to prepare most to become useful, productive individuals, since the majority are not heading toward careers in rocket science or brain surgery. But the modern educational system states that twelve years is not enough and needs to be enriched by four years of college, two years more for a master's program and then on to a Ph.D. The harsh truth is that with the philosophy and practice of humanistic education, graduates of twelve years of schooling are not prepared to do very much.

This is a dramatically different situation from colonial and early America where young men thirteen and fourteen years of age were attending colleges. By lengthening the duration of schooling, we have not produced more mature graduates. We have only prolonged the contrived and fabricated stage of human development called adolescence. Rushdoony is correct when he asserts,

Some Christian parents have bought into the modern perspective that sees adolescence and its storm and stress, its rebelliousness and spirit of independence, as biologically determined and natural to man. In fact, however, adolescence is a cultural product, a hallmark of a decadent culture, and almost unknown in the history of civilization outside the modern era. In most cultures, what we call adolescence is rather a time of the most careful and attentive imitation of adults and of the older generation. Youth, on the verge of mature life and work, is then most concerned about being closer to the adult world and accepted by it. Instead of rebelling against it, youth seeks admission and initiation into the world of adults. Only because existentialism places a premium on isolation and radical

independence do youth associate the dawn of physical maturity with a declaration of war and independence. They are simply enacting thereby the necessary religious “confirmation” rite of the modern world. The Christian child is confirmed in the faith of his fathers as he approaches maturity; the confirmation rite of the humanist child is adolescence and its rebelliousness or existentialism.²

No Ready Market

One would think that knowing that a young person had been educated to live, think, and act as a Christian would make him more marketable in Christian circles. Sadly, this is not always the case. Many Christians are in the position of hiring employees. Why don't these Christians give preference to other Christians? Paul the Apostle instructs the church:

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:10 NKJV)

How is it doing good to Christian young people to make it a requirement that secularists credential them? Most professing Christians fail to see this as a betrayal of Paul's words. Jesus made it clear that the world would be given witness to those who were His disciples.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34–35 NKJV)

The modern version of loving one another involves sentimental feelings rather than a deliberate application of God's law to the practical situations of life. Of what value is a Christian education if by the time it is complete, there isn't a ready market to receive and benefit from these graduates? Could it be that the denigration of God's law within the church has led to the reality that no difference exists between dealing with Christians and pagans? Other ethnic and religious groups give more heed to the spirit of Paul's words within their own cultures than does the Body of Christ.

2. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2001), 163–164.

Godly Alternatives

There *are* Christian colleges and universities, but many have been co-opted and teach the standard fare of their secular counterparts. Those that are faithful to the orthodox faith are often a considerable distance from home and involve uprooting the student from his family and familiar surroundings, not to mention often going into debt to do so. Choices closer to home include a college or university that is secular in nature, where integrity, godliness, and Biblical law are mocked and ridiculed. What are families to do? Just skip college altogether?

If you do not send your child to college, are you abandoning higher education? Of course not. Rather, faithful, close-to-home alternatives to the demonic environment of most college campuses need to be developed. If a particular calling truly dictates venturing into such places, parents need to be equipped to mentor their children through the process of selecting classes, teachers, majors, etc. They need to educate their children with information and tactics in dealing with those who seek to alienate them from Jesus Christ and His law-word.

Summer worldview conferences³ are helpful, but much more is needed. Every Christian student needs to have a support network that includes faithful believers who not only pray for and with them, but also are willing to engage in extensive conversations about the presuppositions of the coursework that is being studied, and highlighting where the material deviates from a Biblical perspective. Failing this, we are sending our children into situations with a big dartboard painted on their face—greatly impaired to defend themselves against the fiery darts that are aimed at them.⁴

3. The mission of the West-Coast Christian Worldview Conference (<http://wvc.ws>) is “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:14–16).

4. Students face a persistent dilemma when they attend a humanistic, God-mocking educational institution. They can stand for their faith and risk failing a course, or they can remain silent and go through the necessary steps to obtain a passing grade. With the first option, they risk wasting both their time and money for a very dubious outcome. With the second option, they risk falling into syncretistic and lukewarm Christianity.

Another very positive model to be utilized is the apprenticeship model. There are apprenticeship programs available for a wide variety of vocations. How marvelous it would be for a Christian child to be able to pursue such programs under the oversight of talented Christian teachers. This may not be possible in all instances, but it is a worthy goal nonetheless. Sure, coursework might be needed in order to get the “union card” credential for a particular field, but those whom the apprentices learn under can serve as mentors and master teachers, guiding the students as to how best to avoid the pitfalls. This would include apprenticing under physicians, teachers, lawyers, nurses, pastors, engineers, plumbers, and electricians.⁵

Some argue that after years in the homeschool setting, it is important and desirable for these students to get a dose of the “real world.” However, as Scripture so clearly defines it, the real world is the world where Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. Anything else is a counterfeit. Thus, to accept the status quo of needing to get a degree from a secular college or university as the mark of being educated and marketable for one’s vocation is really taking a huge step backward for these students. Those who are called into professions that need this “credential” should make ample preparation in the subject areas to be studied, to be sure that they can successfully stand against the wiles of the devils in such places.

Although the Christian education movement has made great strides in the primary and secondary grades, the prospects for higher education are considerably less preferable than the environments from which homeschoolers emerge. God knows we can and must do better.

5. Individual families could work out informal summer internships that would acquaint a prospective student with the realities of a particular career, helping him or her to discover whether this field is truly something to pursue.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Well over a decade ago, I first encountered a recording entitled “The War,” a compilation of the preaching of Dennis Peacocke and the worship music of Ted Sandquist. The full title is “Battle Songs for the War Between Two Seeds.” I was so encouraged by the project that in addition to playing it repeatedly for my family, I shared it with a junior high/senior high co-op class I was teaching on church history.¹

Rev. Peacocke points out that the people of God are simultaneously involved in a cultural war and a spiritual war. He notes that no Christian volunteered for this war, but rather was predestined to be a part of it. The question isn’t who wins the war. The Word of God makes it very clear that Christ has already won the victory. Rather, the question becomes, Are God’s people engaged in the battle or sitting on the sidelines?

Peacocke declares that this war has been engaged and there is no avoiding it. Furthermore, Christians will always have opposition from those who are the seed of the serpent when it comes to our shaping, changing, and challenging the way the world system operates. We must take Jesus at His Word, “[U]pon this rock [the

1. Available from G.W.I. Online, www.gwionline.org/onlinestore.htm.

testimony that Jesus is Lord] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt.16:18). Now that’s the sort of recruitment promise that engenders confidence and resolve!

Seek Ye First the Kingdom

Too few in the army of Christ live as though they believe that actively seeking God’s Kingdom and His righteousness will produce the blessings so clearly outlined throughout the Scriptures and detailed extensively in Deuteronomy 28:1–14. If they did, there would be less reliance on political parties and national opinion polls to make our decisions, less concern as to whether or not the enemies of God approve of our methods, and considerably less shying away from proclaiming the full counsel of God. However, these verses in Deuteronomy were not always ignored. There was a time in American history when the promises of blessings for obedience and curses for transgressions were taken so seriously that when the President of the United States took his oath of office, he placed his hand on an opened Bible, opened to Deuteronomy 28.²

By default, many professing members of the body of Christ end up participating in this *war between two seeds* aligned with and working for the enemy, as they rally to the battle cry of the wolves in sheep’s clothing: “We’re not under law, but under grace.” By agreeing with and living out a lawless Christianity, they are puppets in the hands of Satan and his children and happily swallow this “Tokyo Rose” style propaganda.³

Strong statement? Well, consider the fact that the majority of American Christians blithely place their children in the boot camp and army of the enemies of Jesus Christ for twelve years or more, without hesitation or concern. What’s more, they allow active engagement in the pagan culture by their modes of dress, the movies and television programs they devour, and the unmonitored consumption of profane internet sites. Jesus makes it clear that

2. R. J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 402.

3. Tokyo Rose was the generic name given by American soldiers in WWII to English-speaking Japanese female propagandist broadcasters whose intent was to disrupt the morale of American GIs.

“[e]very kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matt. 12:25). It is no wonder that we find ourselves in the current cultural malaise, swallowed up by the very curses for disobedience God promised.

Going to War

So, how should a Christian family engage this battle? By orienting its time, money, resources, and efforts in a full commitment to the cause of Jesus Christ. This answer is simple to say, but more complex to live out. When the people of God fully embrace that we live by *every word* that proceeds out of the *mouth of God*—in short, applying the entire Word of God to every area of life and thought—then, and only then, will their efforts result in the blessings of Deuteronomy 28:1–14.

The key to this solution lies with the Biblical trustee family, with the father at the helm and the mother actively present in the lives of the children until they establish new families of their own. Homeschooling is a powerful counterattack to the lies and deception of the enemy. What are the prerequisites to a God-honoring home education? The answer is simple but requires a shift in orientation and outlook from that of the modern world.⁴

The law-word of God needs to reign supreme in a Christian home. This is accomplished by regular family Bible study, catechizing, Scripture memorization, sitting under sound preaching, and requiring all family members to reason from Scripture. This requires a strong theological background and should hold a higher priority in the educational curriculum than any other subject. Any requests, decisions, long-range planning, etc., need to be established on a firm Biblical footing, with time spent outlining how a particular choice measures up with and to God’s Word and the family’s place and work in God’s Kingdom.

No family operates without sin and its consequences, but a family whose major educational goal is the pursuit of knowing

4. Rushdoony’s books *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*, *Systematic Theology in Two Volumes*, and *Law & Liberty* are fundamental reading in obtaining an orthodox, Biblical worldview.

God's law and applying it across the disciplines and activities of life is in a far greater position to receive God's blessing than a family that merely focuses on academic subjects and success.

Boot Camp

So where is the boot camp for families who wish to follow this model? God has provided the solution in His Word.

1. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine;
 2. That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.
 3. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;
 4. That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,
 5. To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.
- (Titus 2:1–5)

Self-help books, advice from TV and radio programs, and pop psychology do not hold a candle to the one-on-one relationships that the Apostle Paul commands in these verses. When obeyed as outlined, those who have been helped turn into those who can then help others. Back in 1985 when my husband and I met Dr. and Mrs. Rushdoony, they graciously fulfilled the role of the older man and the older woman in our lives and served as mentors and models for us. We were very rough around the edges, but willing and eager to learn. Now, almost twenty-five years later, we serve as mentors to others. This is the very fruit that should be present and prevalent in all Christian homes and churches. There should be no need initially to resort to a “professional” counselor when all know and can apply the law-word of God to the situations of everyday life.

Through a concerted study of the law-word of God with the intent of practical, everyday application, Christians can fight the spiritual and cultural war that confronts us on every side. For the enemies of God to win in the political realm, their major battles are launched primarily against the family as God's basic institution.

Western society has had a family organization since Christianity became the faith of the West. A man's life, from birth to death, is guided, affected, and colored by family relations. The basic unit of the social order is the family. The family is the socially stable unit where the family has liberty and property.

As a result, the totalitarians hate the family and declare it to be the enemy of social change. Totalitarianism hates the family because it is the basic thesis of all totalitarians that man's first loyalty must be to the state, whereas the Christian family's first allegiance is to the triune God. The totalitarian therefore seeks to abolish the family. Lenin said, "No nation can be free when half the population is enslaved in the kitchen."⁵

The Opposition's Tactics

Is it any wonder that since the last century, at least, a concerted effort has been made to convince women that remaining at home and raising their children is bondage and proof that they lack intelligence and relevance? As families succumbed to the satanic model, a vacuum was created in the lives of families that the totalitarian state was glad to fill. Considering the current push to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁶ Rushdoony's comments back in the middle of the last century are telling:

In the United States, the attack on the family is being steadily mounted. The state increasingly claims jurisdiction over the family, its children, income, and property. The state assumes that it knows what is best for children, and it claims the right to interfere for the children's welfare. As a result, the family is progressively weakened in order to strengthen the power of the state.⁷

The book of Ephesians closes with instructions to the family (Eph. 5). However, the apostle does not stop there, as he knows that none of what he has directed can be accomplished in one's own strength. He therefore directs his brethren in Ephesians 6:10–18:

10. [B]e strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.
11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

5. R. J. Rushdoony, *Law & Liberty* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, [1984], 2009), 94.

6. Lee Duigon, "Will UN Treaty Abolish Parents' Rights?" The Chalcedon Foundation, May 4, 2009, www.chalcedon.edu.

7. Rushdoony, *Law & Liberty*, 95.

12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

These are familiar verses, but often divorced from practical application. Those principalities and powers that we wrestle with and that attack our homes and families are hell-bent on separating us from the love of Christ. What's more, these enemies of Jesus Christ thrive on fracturing families, destroying marriages, and wreaking havoc on the culture once the institution of the family has been routed. At this time in history, we have the antithesis being played out in front of our faces. As Proverbs 8:36 explains, "[H]e that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." With the enemies of God acting with such an open frenzy now, it is apparent that they will not be content until we are all in hell with them. This is true of the homosexuals in our midst but also of the secular statists who are insisting that we go down a road that has been proven historically to fail.

Many Christians continue to live with their heads in the sand, mistaking state-granted permission for liberty under God. They remain oblivious to the steady pounding that the family receives in public education, the mainstream media, the compromised professional spheres, and in their own thinking.

The death of the family is therefore planned, and, on every continent, the executioners are at work. Together with the death of the family, the "death" of God is also proclaimed, and we are assured that the new age has no need for God or the family. The menace and intensity of dedication of these hostile forces cannot

be underestimated. They are an active, powerful, and highly organized force in modern society.⁸

Homeschooling families are not immune to these assaults, and unless the homeschooling mother is proficient in the application of God's law to areas of her home life, being the "older woman" for her daughters, she will not be able to become the "worthy woman" that Proverbs 31 calls her to be. Without a firm resolve and a dedication to a full-orbed application of God's law in the home, she will fail to raise up a generation of women who will know how to look well to the ways of their households and eventually become the "Titus 2" women themselves. For this upcoming generation to survive, they must comprehend the intensity of the battle raging around us and be fully prepared to engage it.

An Army Advances

Rushdoony points out that although the battle looms large, our God is larger.

We dare not underestimate the power of the triune God, Who rules the nations and fulfils His holy purpose despite all the vain conspiracies and wild imaginations of men. But none can share in God's victory unless they stand forth clearly in terms of Him and His holy cause, unless they separate themselves unto Him. Jesus Christ said, "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). And you, where do you stand?⁹

By God's grace, many wives and mothers are waking up to the vital role they play in the present and future advance of God's Kingdom. They see, contrary to all the indoctrination assaults of the past and present, that their place in the battle is not in the workplace, the halls of academia, or outside the home. They see that the proverbial phrase "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world"¹⁰ is not only true, but also ordained by the living God.

8. *Ibid.*, 77.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Taken from the poem by the same name by William Ross Wallace

8

A WOMAN OF FAITH

Dorothy Ross Rushdoony, wife of R. J. Rushdoony, was an individual who had a profound influence in my life and the lives of many Christian women. Despite a life that saw its share of hardship and disappointment, and one where she occupied a supportive role rather than one in the spotlight, Dorothy maintained a love for God's law and embraced the fact that the elect, in being obedient to His Word, don't always have an easy road. Dorothy Rushdoony served as a role model to Christian women of a Proverbs 31 woman in its fullest and deepest sense. It would be omitting a significant chapter in the history of Christian Reconstruction to omit the enormous contribution made by this woman of faith.

My first introduction to the Rushdoonys came back in 1985 when a good friend steered my husband and me in the direction of Rush's books. After reading just a bit and listening to his *Easy Chair* tapes, we became convinced that connecting with R. J. Rushdoony was not a luxury, but a necessity. Becoming acquainted with him meant becoming acquainted with his wife, Dorothy. From the outset of our interaction, they were truly a package deal. We would schedule our vacations, travel up from San Jose on weekends, and take every opportunity to visit with them, asking theological ques-

tions and discussing current affairs from a Reformed, reconstructionist worldview.

In that season of my life, I unofficially adopted Dorothy Rushdoony as my mother and she likewise took me as her daughter. This relationship was priceless to me and my family. As she watched my children grow up, she demonstrated a keen perception regarding their personalities and character. She always had the capacity of dealing with children frankly, never patronizing them or talking down to them. When I became pregnant in 1991, one of my prayers was that the Lord would give us a girl so that I could name her after Dorothy. (God gave me the desire of my heart!) Dorothy Rushdoony always encouraged me in the homeschooling of my children and constantly challenged me to treat them as individuals. It was Dorothy who got me started working with Ross House Books getting Rush's manuscripts typeset and into print. Her enthusiasm for these projects wore off on me and today this activity occupies much of my time and effort.

Dorothy never hesitated to "call it as she saw it" and embodied the scriptural truth, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Her ability to "get to the bottom line" on issues was truly remarkable, if not sometimes uncomfortable. Two instances come to mind. Once I was expressing aggravation to her over the fact that my efforts to get pregnant for a third time were repeatedly frustrated. I anticipated that she would share in my pity-party, validating my irritations. Instead, she looked at me resolutely and asked, "What makes you think that you create eternal life?" Talk about being put back in your place! Another time we were lamenting how painful it was to go to antinomian churches in our area and have to suffer through repeated sermons where grace and law were continuously pitted against each other. In her inimitable style she responded bluntly, "How long are you two planning to torture yourselves in this way? Why not start your own house church?" It was at her suggestion with Rush's encouragement that we did just that and for fifteen years we had a church that met in our home.

Other women I've spoken with, who benefitted from Dorothy's counsel and perspectives, comment that Dorothy had been

an older woman in the Lord whom they could go to for solid, Biblical, trustworthy advice, and she always gave them much food for thought and growth. As the woman behind the throne, always serving her husband and helping him with her day-in, day-out devotion, she communicated a powerful message to them about loving their husbands — a message that has first of all been lived out in her committed life. The prefaces and introductions in many of Rush's books which express his great appreciation for the woman God gave him as a helpmate, are much more understandable if you knew Dorothy and all she meant to him.

Dorothy was right by Rush's side in keeping abreast of what he was studying Biblically. She numbered among his best students and must rank as among the most loyal. Her ability to enter into theological discussions made it obvious that she had spent a great amount of time in the Word of God and had a firm grasp of Scripture and doctrine. I could tell during our lengthy conversations that her opinions were reached freely and were not carbon-copies of her husband's. I witnessed a woman who was well-read and who contemplated the implications of her faith in her life.

Dorothy encouraged me to not hide my God-given gifts. She helped me to realize that as a woman I did not have to take a back seat in theological discussions and conversations regarding the application of God's law to daily life. She helped me see that my role was to be submissive to my husband, not necessarily silent. Through her influence I began to truly understand how the Christian Faith elevates women to a much higher station than any other philosophy or religion. She helped me to see that our calling is a high one that demands us to be fluent, articulate, and ready to act on the dictates of Scripture, not shying away from hard questions or hard decisions. Dorothy shared the perspective many times that godly submission isn't about sexuality (i.e., whether you're the man or the woman, the husband or the wife). As she put it, godly submission is just like an army, somebody is the commanding officer, and in a family, that person is the husband. Therefore, it behooves all in that army to recognize their roles to help the forward progress of the Kingdom of God.

One woman put it this way, “At times in my life, when I’ve been ‘stuck’ for some reason, and needed a trustworthy perspective, I’ve called Dorothy and always walked away from our conversations with strength for the journey and wisdom that only a mature, godly person can give. I never thought of Dorothy as my equal — though I considered her one of my dearest friends. God gifted her with the grace and wisdom that comes with ‘age’ and I was the benefactor of listening to that sage advice many, many times.”

Dorothy’s contribution on an organizational level was also extensive and unfailing. She was the typist, proofreader, and confidant of R. J. Rushdoony during his years of formulating the ideas of Christian Reconstruction. She worked, with others, at getting the *Chalcedon Report* into circulation and handled many of the mundane jobs that were essential but did not bring much glory. With her support and encouragement, Rush embarked on a career of calling the modern church to task for its failure to take the Word of God seriously and apply it to all areas of life and thought. He wrote and she worked diligently to get his words into print. For those readers who cannot picture life without computers, spell checkers, and automated labeling, much of this work was accomplished using manual typewriters and mimeograph machines, where the demand for accuracy and perseverance required much greater effort than what we are used to today. She would manually index Rush’s books with him and help flesh out his ideas. Her unpaid work was acknowledged by Rush by his naming the publishing arm of Chalcedon, Ross House Books, using her maiden name.

Dorothy witnessed her vision and appreciation for her husband’s calling bloom from a small seed into a growing, blossoming tree. She was a vital part of his work from the beginning and was eager to do it. I have heard people comment that Rush truly became a productive writer when God brought Dorothy into his life. Dorothy saw the Christian Reconstruction movement and the Chalcedon Foundation grow. She was there as people came to “investigate” Rush and what he taught. She provided unselfish hospitality and often had to share personal-family time with visitors. She remained a credit to her Scottish heritage in standing by her husband as he asserted the dignity and relevance of God’s law to a

church and world that had lost touch and fallen into darkness. Never flinching from the personal attacks directed at Rush from many quarters, on the contrary she continued to open her house and her life to all comers — potential friend or foe.

In the early 90s, Dorothy began to go blind. The technical term is macular degeneration complicated by glaucoma. Dorothy was stripped of the thing she loved best — reading the Word of God and helping in the production of the *Chalcedon Report* and Rush's books. The pill was bitter indeed. Not being able to read! Not being able to have her hand on the pulse of the day-to-day workings of the ministry she'd devoted much of her energies to for years and years. Dorothy spent a good deal of time testing the very theology she had been immersed in for so long.

Dorothy was probably best known among those who knew her for her practical attitudes and her unassuming demeanor. For a while she had a regular column in the *Chalcedon Report* and many women, and just as many men, used to read Dorothy's articles first. An example of her useful insights came in an article entitled, "In This House You Are Lord." In it, she emphasized that when a husband returns home from the battles of life each day, a wife should have him know that as he steps over the threshold, "in his house he is lord." These and other Biblical themes, not in vogue in today's culture, were of great concern to her until she died. She had a passion for studying and understanding the proper Biblical roles for men and women — the gender issue as she liked to call it — and many of us are saddened that her failing health prevented her from more writing on the subject.

As I look back on the 18 years that I had the honor and privilege of knowing her, I realize how important Dorothy was in my life. She represented the best of what St. Paul describes in Titus 2:3–4, "the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." I came to her needing such a woman in my life and she more than instructed me in these things. She helped me appropriate

the role of “older woman” — called to help younger women assume their God-given responsibilities. Our world has been blessed by her wisdom which correctly perceived the desperation of feminism as well as the slothfulness of mindless submission. One grateful woman summed it up this way, “Dorothy left a legacy which includes not being afraid to speak your own mind while in the same breath maintaining the power derived from godly submission.”

Rousas John Rushdoony is acknowledged as the Father of the Christian Reconstruction movement; most certainly, Dorothy deserves recognition as its mother.

9

THE OLDER WOMAN

When young I was married and expecting the bliss
That was penned in novels or written in scripts,
I quickly discovered that marriage demanded more
Than gifts from the wedding and being carried through the door.

My husband though a blessing from the Lord up above
Couldn't teach me to humble myself and him freely love.
For that one was needed who had walked in my shoes.
A woman much older was the method God would choose.

Her hair was a white crown, her face mapped with wrinkles,
Her gait was not steady, but her eyes how they twinkled.
She was full of the wisdom that comes from a life
That had embraced the role of a helpmeet and wife.

At times I'd call her to complain about my man,
And she'd listen and question to help me understand
That I hadn't been called to be the person in charge,
But to submit to God's purpose which was righteous and large.

She wounded me faithfully in my unbelief,
And showed me by her actions that grace was within reach.
Be discreet, chaste, and sober;

Love children; love husband.
Be obedient to his wishes;
See that godliness ne'er diminishes,
So the Word of God is not blasphemed.

The day came when this older woman went to receive her reward.
Weeks before we had spoken—these were her tender words:
“I'm leaving you, Dear, to join my Savior in heaven.
Now you be the older woman. Go help six or seven.”

At first I was anxious. How could I become
Like the woman God sent to help me respond
To His call on my life, a worthy woman to be?
My dear friend assured that His grace was sufficient for me.

She reminded me that I had something to teach
To the keepers at home—many within reach.
Be discreet, chaste, and sober;
Love children; love husband.
Be obedient to his wishes;
See that godliness ne'er diminishes,
So the Word of God is not blasphemed.

There are numbers of younger ones expecting the bliss
That's been penned in novels or written in scripts.
They know now that marriage demands so much more
Than gifts from the wedding and to be carried through the door.

I look in the mirror and what do I see
With the same set of eyes that have always been me?
But a vessel of God to be used in His story.
As now, the older woman,
I help others to live to His glory.¹

1. Dedicated and inspired by the older woman in my life, Dorothy Rushdoony.

IO

FROM HEARERS TO DOERS

The book of Ecclesiastes ends with a straightforward directive, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. (Eccl. 12:13–14)

This statement presupposes that God’s law-word is the rule for all areas of life and thought, and calls us to obedience to it as a duty. Anyone who takes this admonition seriously will naturally need and want to know, *how do we go from being hearers of the Word to being doers of the Word?*

Rushdoony in his second volume of *Institutes of Biblical Law* states,

[O]bedience to the law of God is the alpha and omega of *faith*. Christians were not called into being by Christ’s regenerating power in order to be impotent but to be world conquerors ... It is because Christ is the omnipotent King that He gives His sovereign order that we are to occupy and possess all nations in His name, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). We cannot properly teach the observance of what we ourselves have not obeyed.¹

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. 2, Law and Society* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982), 253.

Acquiring the Language of Law

The early years of parenting involve lots of “hands on” interaction, with the mother mostly responsible for teaching her child many things, including the native tongue. In fact, most children have no difficulty in learning the different kinds of sentences in grammar—declarative (*Mommy loves you.*); interrogative (*Does that feel good?*); imperative (*Don't cry.*); and exclamatory (*What a good boy!*)—because they have “experienced” language from day one. The acquisition of language is a natural development with practical application preceding theoretical understanding. Similarly, children self-consciously taught by their parents from a Biblical framework and perspective grow up guided by the Word of God long before they may be in a position to read it for themselves or fully understand it.

The law-word of God should be *the* staple by which the family gets its spiritual nourishment and bearings. Reasons for obedience and adherence to family rules must be placed within the context of God's authority; otherwise, parental preference may all too easily overshadow God's commandments. When a child's challenge gets the response, “Because I said so,” without the preceding context that all people everywhere are under God's authority and that all subsequent authority is delegated by God, the conclusion can easily be reached that “might makes right,” “stature makes right,” or “financial advantage makes right.”

Rushdoony stresses the importance of the law function of the family:

Historically and Biblically, the family is the central institution in law and in society. Although we do not think of the family normally as a lawmaking body, the family is nonetheless the basic lawmaking body in all history. Every point of power and authority is also a point of law, and, historically, family law has been the basic law of mankind. In any society or institution, there are basic rules of conduct, and these rules of conduct constitute its law structure. The family is man's basic lawmaking body because of a variety of reasons, but certainly one of the first of these is the fact that it is the first place man, as a child, encounters law, rules of conduct, and his idea of law is shaped and defined to a great degree by the family. Life is seen through a law structure which the family gives to the child, and this law structure defines life for the child. But this is not

all. The child's attitude towards every other institution and its laws is largely shaped by the family. How the child approaches and reacts to church, school, state, and society depends greatly on his source of law, parental authority. He can face other lawmaking bodies rebelliously, or he can face them obediently. His attitude can be constructive, destructive, or indifferent, depending on his family background to a large degree. Every parent daily is a lawmaking person, a focal point of law enforcement, and the delinquency of parents in this respect is their delinquency before God, their Lord and sovereign.²

How to Use the Tools of the Trade

It is not enough, however, to teach the law devoid of practical application to every day life. Those who teach need to be well versed in *how* to use God's Word in a proper and orthodox fashion, demonstrating that a course of action is in line with Biblical law or not. This presupposes that

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16–17, NASB

Let me illustrate. My husband is not a repairman, and has for most of our married life paid others to handle the repairs and upkeep around our home. However, lately he has ventured into various home improvement tasks. These projects often involve sorties to the hardware store. Long ago, he abandoned the practice of going to the home improvement superstores because he became all too easily overwhelmed with choices without anyone to help him sort through the maze of product selections. His store of choice has become a local hardware store that seems to have a place in its heart for guys like him, those whose spirits are willing, but whose flesh is very inexperienced. My husband says, "I need much more than the *helpful* rejoinder, 'You can find the gopher repellents on aisle six.' I need someone to explain to me how the various products on the shelf will deal with the annoying gopher that is tearing up our backyard. I'm happy when I find someone who will be honest and admit, 'This one will amuse the gopher; this one

2. R. J. Rushdoony, *Law & Liberty* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, [1984], 2009), 99.

will send him to another yard; and this one will be his last meal!” With that information, my husband can decide which product he will purchase and he has a better understanding of the likelihood of success.

Our culture has no shortage of Bibles or those who know the location of various Scripture verses. However, there are a very limited number of people who are willing and able to expound the law-word of God in very practical terms, with experience and expertise to help the floundering “shoppers” in the aisles of life. Parents, especially, should not miss the opportunities to use the mundane, everyday circumstances of life as springboards to active application of God’s law-word in their children. Our most basic activity as believers—seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness— involves becoming “experts” in the law-word of God able to apply it in the smallest details of our lives, and serving as a guide for those we encounter.

The book of James is a practical “how-to manual,” teaching us the way to take dominion in Jesus’ name. He calls us to move from theoretical understanding into hands-on application when he says,

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. (James 1:22-25)

Rushdoony explains,

James gives us an unusual illustration, a mirror. Those who are hearers only, and not doers of the word of God, are like a man who looks into a mirror to see if he is pleased with himself. Having done this, and having satisfied himself that his hair is properly combed, his clothing in place, and his general appearance pleasing, he moves on. He is not mindful of “what manner of man he is.” However, the man who makes God’s law-word his mirror tries to conform himself to the image God requires of him. God’s law is “the perfect law of liberty” (v. 25), and it impels man to be “a doer of the word.” Such a man is blessed in his deed or doing.³

3. R. J. Rushdoony, *Hebrew, James, & Jude* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2001), 156.

As we disciple our children or others with whom we come into contact, our utmost priority should be to communicate the gospel message that only through Christ's atoning blood can the people of God, through the Holy Spirit, move from death to life, from being arrogant towards God and chronically disobedient to fearing God and keeping His commandments. Rushdoony explains,

Covenant man alone sees the revelation of God's law-word as his means to problem solving. It is a revelation which simplifies his life because it gives it meaning and declares ...

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. (Joshua 1:7-8)."⁴

Rushdoony reminds the covenant people that the law-word of God as given to Moses,

... declares not only that God's law belongs to us as the key which opens up the world to us as our area of dominion, but that we are required to "do all the words of this law" because God so declares it. The law of God is man's only true means to dominion and prosperity, but, whatever the results, it is our duty to obey God.⁵

The Future Belongs to the Faithful

There is another aspect of family learning and that is its influence on future generations. For example, in our time, we see the continual growth of the Christian education movement. Parents who were raised in government schools or without a self-conscious Biblical worldview have come to a clearer understanding of God's requirements to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. As a result, their children are receiving a systematic Christian education. As this trend continues, and each generation

4. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. 2, Law and Society* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982), 409-410.

5. *Ibid.*

insists on an orthodox Christian education for their children, the landscape for Christian reconstruction gets brighter and brighter.

Likewise, there is resurgence in the pursuit of the Biblical trustee family, and we see Christians abandoning the humanistic model of superficial, emotional relationships as the basis for marriage. A new generation is pursuing relationships with Biblical standards and guidelines for the selection of a spouse. It is encouraging to note just how many young people, having been steeped in the *Institutes of Biblical Law*, are better equipped to find godly spouses committed to building godly families who are Kingdom oriented.

As present and future generations become more grounded in the Biblical teaching regarding Creation, there will be an impact on their understanding of birth control and other choices surrounding life and death, issues concerning scientific research, gardening, and agriculture. Even in terms of politics, Christian children of the future who know and understand God's laws more fully than their parents will require more of political candidates than that they are members of a particular party or give lip service to conservative-family values.

As we continue in faithfulness, future generations can become godlier than we are and further the Kingdom with a fullness we can only imagine. To prepare for this glorious future requires individual study and application as we remember that we live before the face of God. We need always to be conscious of that and wonder how to please Him with every breath we take. It often comes down to testimonies like Job's ("Though he slay me yet will I serve him.") and the three Hebrew children ("Our God is able to save us but if He doesn't we will not bow down to your statue."). This is the rubber meeting the road, moment by moment. It must be accomplished in us as individuals and then as Christian families growing together in faith.

Rushdoony states it well,

The regenerated consciousness submits itself to the word of God and tests all things in terms of the moral verdict of Scripture ...

The Kingdom of God is man's highest good. "By the term kingdom of God we mean the realized program of God for man." ... Man must become spontaneous in his reaction to God's

purpose, and self-determined in his obedience to God's determination or plan for man ...

This program of God, which is man's highest good, includes not only the saving of individual souls but also the subjection of all things to Christ and His absolute and comprehensive ethical standard of perfection, while realizing that this perfection is only attained with His second coming. This requirement to realize God's plan involves the redemption of men, the conquest of all institutions, and all spheres of life, the destruction of evil, and at all times to live in terms of a lively hope of Christ and His triumph ...

Grace was given to man to re-establish him in obedience to God's law, which is the ordained way whereby man's highest good can be realized.⁶

It is within our reach to be the salt and light we are commanded to be if we utilize the weapons of our warfare and give hands-on instruction to others we encounter. This is the mission Chalcedon has labored at since its inception, and one that is life-changing in its application, when we think God's thoughts after Him.

Some Practical Examples

Another important aspect of becoming doers of the word is to share our knowledge and testimony with those around us. Just like the helpful store clerks who guide my husband to the correct aisle and offer the practical assistance to help him solve home improvement problems, Christians versed in knowing and applying God's law to all aspects of life further the Kingdom of God by using the "hardware" we've been given to improve the spiritual condition of those we encounter.

We deal in community/communion with each other, sharing where and how we have learned and helping others in their walk. This means teaching what we know (and our knowledge should increase over time) and applying it to those around us. I have had the privilege of being used by God in the lives of friends. Here are a few examples of how I have applied the Word of God in their situations.

A casual acquaintance of mine once in conversation told me that she and her husband had decided not to have any children. She

6. R. J. Rushdoony, *Revolt Against Maturity* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1987), 242-224.

listed her very rational reasons (age, the condition of the world, and a lack of desire) and I listened. Rather than give a polite nod, indicating that I understood, I challenged her and stated without explanation or apology that children were a blessing from the Lord. I let her know that she would be missing one of the true joys and delights of life by failing to have children if she and her husband were able.

Years later, in conversation with another woman she had introduced me to, she explained that after hearing what I said and noting the conviction with which I said it, had caused her to examine her thinking and, thanks to me, she and her husband changed their minds and had two children. Quite honestly, the conversation had slipped my mind, but she remembered it vividly. What's more, because of my lifestyle example and encouragement she actively homeschools those children.

Another personal example involves an evening I spent with a friend who had been married to an unbeliever for years, having been converted shortly after their wedding. She faithfully adhered to the Scriptural directive to remain married as long as her unbelieving spouse was willing, thereby sanctifying him and her children. There came a point when her husband became very mocking and antagonistic to the faith and left, followed by a divorce. Here was a woman who knew and had applied the Scriptures, but because of her ordeal was very negative about the subject of marriage in general. Her theoretical doctrine was in order, but she was extremely vocal about the fact that she was not a big fan of marriage and wanted no part of it.

Even though I fully understood the reasons behind her perspective, I could not allow her perspective to stand without being challenged. I reproved her (firmly but kindly), letting her know that when she bad-mouthed marriage, she was assaulting God's basic institution of the family and that she was making it harder for her children to seriously contemplate entering into this most basic covenant. Furthermore, I reminded her that marriage was a picture of the relationship of Christ and His church and her attitude dishonored that.

Months later, she called to let me know how God had used my words to her. She told me that she considered what I had said and repented of her sin, for she realized that her perspective was indeed sinful. She embraced the forgiveness of Christ and within a week, through a series of church contacts, was introduced to the brother of a close friend, and this led to a godly, Christian marriage.⁷

The Conclusion of the Matter

There is no doubt that moving from being hearers of the Word to doers of the Word is not without its challenges. Rushdoony makes the observation that

The consequences of obeying God will commonly produce human conflicts, but they will also produce peace with God and peace in Him. To refuse conflicts with men in the name of peace is to choose conflict with God.⁸

True contentment comes only with active obedience to God's law. Anything less is submission to evil. Jesus has a high regard for those who keep the commandments of God and teach others to do likewise:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (Matt. 7:24–25)

7. Obedience and repentance do not always lead to such an immediate happy result, but nonetheless bring God's blessings on those who through faithful obedience seek His grace and mercy.

8. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. 2, Law and Society* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982), 578.

II

STABILITY IN TROUBLING TIMES

In 1989, California experienced the Loma Prieta earthquake. I remember vividly sitting in a karate studio watching my daughter's class when the ground began to shake. I gathered the children and moved them under the door frame just in time to avoid being hit by all the trophies that were on a shelf above where I had been sitting. It was obvious that this was not your run-of-the-mill quake—something significant had occurred. In October of 1989, there were no cell phones so I was unable to contact my husband or find out how my elderly mother-in-law, who lived with us, had fared. Instability ruled the hour.

My son was glued to his pocket radio because the San Francisco Giants were about to begin game one of the World Series against the Oakland A's. His biggest upset during the quake's aftermath was that the game was called off all because of a little earthquake (6.9 on the Richter scale). When he told me that the Bay Bridge had collapsed, I became angry. I had more to think about than a disappointed eleven-year-old who felt the need to make up a preposterous story.

However, the Bay Bridge had collapsed and there was other significant damage and loss of life. Fear and uncertainty ruled the

day. No one knew what was going to happen next, as aftershocks literally rocked our world.

We are living in fearful and unstable times. We have an inflation-based economic system that is teetering on the edge of collapse. Many have suffered loss in savings and retirement accounts through no fault of their own. We see our constitutional republic dissolving while statist politicians daily usurp every facet of individual liberty and march our once-Christian nation toward socialist tyranny. Godless subversives aggressively erase every shred of Christianity from the public square with their eye on removing Christianity from the hearts and minds of the faithful.

Those who are not feeling these pangs are either oblivious to circumstances around them or are financially benefitting from these instabilities. These are times of judgment against unrighteousness, and those God-haters who revel in their short-term victories are only marching towards their own death and destruction.

Faithful Christians do not escape the painful realities in times of God's judgment (Matt. 5:45), even though they have, in many cases, taken stands against the evil that is overwhelming their culture. Although they have tried to live faithfully, consistently tithe, providentially save, and budget funds to provide a Christian education for their children, many find themselves in difficult circumstances, with incomes ravaged by the situations we are all facing. The tendency in times like these is to bunker down, protect what is remaining, and scale back expenditures. Unfortunately, many choose to allow their children's Christian education to become a casualty. For them, it becomes a luxury that can be set aside, instead of an essential of life and Kingdom service designed to build spiritual capital in their children.

Time to Storm the Gates

However, this is not the time to retreat from our duties as Christian parents. In fact, it is time for Christian parents to be even more diligent in the care and nurture of their precious children. Furthermore, homeschooling Christian parents need to challenge professing brothers and sisters who leave their children under the

supervision and tutelage of those who hate the Lord, His laws, and His sovereignty. We need to call to account their commitment to “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” and encourage them to be faithful in this most serious calling.

If we are going to be faithful friends (Prov. 27:6), we need to exhort those in our churches to confess with Joshua, “[A]s for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15). To do this Christians must be well versed in the unbiblical nature of statist education and be prepared to discuss it. Books such as *The Messianic Character of American Education*, *Intellectual Schizophrenia*, *Victims of Dick and Jane*, *Revolution via Education*, *The Harsh Truth About Public Schools* and *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum*¹ all deal with the underpinnings of the humanist, statist educational monopoly while providing insight and direction to those who wake up to the poison of the public schools.

I know all the arguments that Christians levy against Christian education: Their children are missionaries. Who will be left at these schools if all the Christians leave? If they place their children in Christian schools, they will not have enough money to donate to their church’s building fund, and on and on. I seriously wonder what it will be like for them as they stand before the Lord giving an account of the stewardship of their children.

The Sheep and the Goats

Consider this passage:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

1. Available from www.ChalcedonStore.com.

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matt. 25:31–46) [Emphasis added.]

Let's examine this passage from the point of view of the Lord speaking to parents in terms of how they raised and nurtured their children in the faith. Consider the verses italicized above. Could they not apply in this fashion? Here is a suggested paraphrase:

First, the positive reading: When I was hungry and thirsty for Truth and was uncovered in my sin, and was imprisoned in my own rebellion, you were there to provide instruction in wisdom, and words of understanding. You were there to give subtlety to me when I was simple, to provide me with discernment and discretion. You saw to it that I was taught by those who would lead me to true wisdom—the fear of the Lord—and made it so that I did not remain a fool. You arranged for me to be satisfied when I hungered and thirsted for righteousness, by teaching me to love God and

keep His commandments, because that is my duty as a human being. *For whatsoever you did to the least of my brethren (your children) you did unto me.*

Now, the negative reading: When I was hungry and thirsty for Truth and was uncovered in my sin, and was imprisoned in my own rebellion, you sent me to a place that told me there was no absolute Truth. You sent me to a place that refused to speak the name of the Lord except in a profane way. You left me to learn history and science from those who claim there is no Creator, there is no God, and there is no need of salvation from sin. You placed me under the authority of those who would pervert the picture given in Scripture of Christ's relationship to His bride by exalting that which God declares an abomination. *For whatsoever you did to the least of my brethren (your children) you did unto me.*

Sobering, isn't it? For those who have been obedient, there is more work to be done within the greater body of Christ. Speak to those in your extended families, churches, neighborhoods, and jobs who profess to love God and believe His Word, and show them that they are allowing their children to drink from a well that you know is poisoned. Proverbs 31:8–9 delineates our responsibility to

8. Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

9. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

A Better Investment

Rushdoony was fond of noting, "History has never been dominated by majorities, but only by dedicated minorities who stand unconditionally on their faith." We are at a point, as a dedicated minority, to challenge the world, the flesh, and the devil by uncompromisingly declaring the crown rights of King Jesus. As Dennis Peacocke was fond of saying, "The time for polite Christianity is over."²

To help that dedicated minority stand unconditionally on their faith, Chalcedon is spearheading a multi-pronged approach to

2. From his sermon, "The War Between Two Seeds."

disseminating the simple yet powerful reality that Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and His law-word is and should be the rule of law over every sphere of life. As Rushdoony so eloquently asserted again and again, Christians will not accomplish this by the sword. Revolution is not the answer—regeneration is.

The resort to revolution or to revolutionary tactics is thus a confession of no faith; it means the death of a civilization because its people are dead in their sins and trespasses. They may use the name of the Lord, but they have by-passed him for “direct action.” In doing so, they have forgotten that since Day 1 of creation, all the power and the direct action are only truly in God’s hands. By assuming that everything depends on their action, they have denied God and His regenerating power.

And they have forgotten our Lord’s requirement: “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). Regeneration, not revolution, is God’s way.³

God has given each believer a sphere of influence in which to operate. The Biblical model is not the platform of stardom or mass appeal, but one-on-one, making disciples of all nations. For it is in the interpersonal relationships, marked by Christ’s directive to us to “outdo one another in showing honor” (Rom. 12:10) and providing service (Mark 10:43), that we reconstruct our society.

Each of us has been given by God distinct and useful talents that He expects us to use to further His Kingdom. First, you have to become an expert in knowing and applying God’s Word to everyday situations in order to effectively use these talents. This comes about as God’s law-word is the starting point for all decisions and courses of action. Next, you need to actively seek to develop relationships with those with whom you come in contact. Since they, too, experience the results of living in a fallen world, there will be many conversations and circumstances where they will benefit from hearing the Biblical solution to their situations and concerns.

Law & Liberty Study Groups

Getting started is easier than one might imagine. Chalcedon already has the volumes of books and essays left by its founder, R. J.

3. R. J. Rushdoony, “Revolution or Regeneration,” Position Paper 105, *Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 426–428.

Rushdoony, and the position papers⁴ of Chalcedon's Vice President Martin Selbrede to educate those willing to become part of the dedicated Kingdom-seeking minority. Utilizing Rushdoony's excellent small but potent volume *Law & Liberty*, small groups can begin to comprehend the relation between God's law and true liberty. Already there are groups around the country making use of *Law & Liberty* utilizing study questions that are available for download from the Chalcedon site. These informal study groups introduce students to the reality that apart from God's law established in our culture there will never be liberty. Group leaders have a program at their disposal to help them disciple interested participants. Today's troubles and instabilities are making the harvest ripe.

Homeschool Co-op Classes

One of the most eager and receptive groups is homeschooled high school students. They are sharp and acutely aware of the challenges their generation faces. Moreover, their parents are constantly looking for innovative ways to prepare them for higher education, the job market, and service to God's Kingdom. Homeschooling veteran teachers whose children have graduated could serve as instructors for these groups. I just finished teaching a public speaking class (Fall 09) using *Law & Liberty* as my text.

One mother shared with me the profound impact my class had on her son, who before participating was complaining about being homeschooled and eager to go back to public school. She reported that after a week or two, the complaints ceased and he began sharing with her and his dad the subjects that were covered in the book and in our class. Both parents began reading the book. She thanked me for being an answer to prayer. Now, she said, her son understood that everyone has an agenda. He's glad he is learning from a Christian world and life view.

Offer your services to the homeschooling community in your area, possibly teaching a class in history, economics, or current events. With the revamped Chalcedon website, countless materials are at your disposal that present a full-orbed application of the

4. Available for download at www.chalcedon.edu.

Christian faith to all areas of life.⁵ Not sure how to implement this? I am always eager to help believers identify areas where they can be of service to others.⁶

Young Mother Support Groups

This is a fertile area (no pun intended) for Christian wives and mothers to make an impact. Many new mothers grew up without a dedicated course in home economics, never baby-sat, and were never taught a Christian perspective on child rearing. In my experience, many are actually intimidated by their infants. Coming alongside them in a mentoring role will make a huge difference in the lives of these families.

I make a point of initiating conversations with parents of small children while shopping and am continually surprised at how willing they are to share the circumstances of their lives. I lead the conversation to the future reality of schooling and before long, they are asking for my contact information because they wish to discuss homeschooling with me.⁷

The Possibilities are Endless

I believe that if we work together and brainstorm about moving the Kingdom of God forward in our time, we will come up with many innovative strategies. For example, what if the men of the local church made a point of providing informal seminars to the young men of their congregation sharing with them the details of their professions? The results could include mentoring relationships as some of the young men pursue similar career choices. How about voluntary tutoring services, making oneself available to assist families with children who are struggling academically? Maybe you have expertise or a natural ability in a subject area in which they are having difficulty. Maybe you can offer encouragement and sup-

5. Anyone who has gone through Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law* or *Systematic Theology* is equipped to teach on a variety of subjects.

6. Contact me via the Chalcedon Foundation.

7. Get some business cards made up with your phone number and e-mail address, and have them ready to share with those with whom you come in contact. Be prepared to minister!

port. You will discover all too quickly that the opportunities outnumber those willing to seize them.

Conclusion

The house of cards of humanistic materialism is crumbling. It is not going down without a fight, but its bankruptcy is so obvious that only fabrications, lies, and coercive tactics are able to prop it up. The question is who will be there to pick up the pieces when its inevitable collapse occurs? Those who have been trained in the humanistic, atheistic, materialistic model? Will they be able to deal with the instability that is sure to present itself as the Nanny State can no longer handle the lawlessness and chaos it created?

No, those who will be prepared to establish a Biblically faithful society will have been schooled in Biblical law, and will be able to identify practices and ideologies that stand in presumptuous, open rebellion to the Lord. Rather than trample underfoot those who oppose them, they will seek to make disciples of former enemies, sharing the Good News of Christ, that through belief and faithful living they can become sons rather than foes. Those who have been taught a systematic theology, an accurate history, and who are subject to the reign and rule of Jesus Christ will be the rebuilders of our culture.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (Matt. 7:24–25)

I2

TURF WARFARE

When I was first learning arithmetic, I remember being corrected when I attempted to subtract a larger number from a smaller one. It was dutifully explained that if I started with only eight objects, it was impossible to take away ten. That made sense to me, and I was satisfied because I now knew the “truth” about numbers. In later grades, the subject of integers arose, and I was angry when I discovered there were such things as negative numbers. I was livid! Why had my teachers lied to me? It turns out that you *can* take larger numbers away from smaller ones. My mother attempted to console me in my wrath, explaining that conventional wisdom did not think small children could understand this advanced concept. By the time I was teaching my own children in a homeschool setting, I better understood the choices my teachers had made. Yet, I was certain to qualify my instruction of subtraction with the disclaimer, “You can’t subtract a larger number from a smaller one, in most cases.” When asked about those cases, I responded with examples that would make sense to each child. For my son, I explained it was like someone who spends money he does not have and overdraws a checking account, resulting in a negative balance. For my daughter, who had grown up around the golf world, the explanation was much easier since in golf,

scoring involves the use of negative numbers for good shots—birdies and eagles.

I recount this because the perspective that children are unable to deal with “difficult” concepts often transfers to areas more important than arithmetic. It seriously underestimates what young ones can comprehend. In matters of Scripture, many parents shy away from “unpleasant” subjects like hell, sin, punishment, God’s wrath, and condemnation because they wish to present a picture of the faith that is pleasant and inviting. By assuming these ideas and realities are beyond their children’s grasp, the substance of the gospel is lost because the antithesis is not presented. Children have the capacity to digest these concepts and respond with the honest, emotional responses that Jesus commended (Mark 10:15). Contrary to the nonsensical ideas of child psychology, children are not injured when they are told the truth about their depravity. However, this view is not rampant among secularists alone.

Dr. Rushdoony, theologian and founder of the Chalcedon Foundation, recounts an incident from his childhood that became a defining moment for him. From a very early age, he had been an avid reader of the Bible, having read it through a half a dozen times or more by the time he was in his teens. When he was about ten or eleven, a Congregational minister, rather than being delighted that someone so young was such a serious student of God’s Word, was shocked when he learned that Rush had already read the *entire* Bible, cross-examining him as to whether he had, in fact, read *everything*. Because the pastor kept pressing the point, Rushdoony remembers being very embarrassed and horrified that there was something wrong with certain passages of the Bible.

This incident had a different result than the “well-meaning” minister intended. Rushdoony, in relating this story, said that it naturally predisposed him to take everything in Scripture very seriously and to believe that it was all the Word of God and therefore all binding. He credits this perspective with predisposing him as a child to Biblical law.¹

1. Excerpted from the transcript of an oral history given by R. J. Rushdoony to Janet Larson.

However, it is not enough to identify for children their need of a Savior. Children born into Christian families are also born into the front lines of warfare for Christ's Kingdom, against the unregenerate world. Christian parents must teach their children to understand this, as soon as possible, and to live with God's Word as the openly acknowledged authority in every area of life.

The Covenantal Model

As Christian parents raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it is important to place the emphasis on *teaching* the faith rather than pushing for a profession of faith. Rebirth in Christ is a supernatural act of God, and no amount of prompting, manipulating, or cajoling will produce a regenerated servant of Christ.

Being born into a believing family does not guarantee a saving faith. So, if the parents' role is not to persuade, what is it? The answer lies in God's prescription for family bonds found in Deuteronomy, where God instructs parents to make it their number one priority to *teach* their children God's precepts morning, noon, and night.

4. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

5. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. (Deut. 6:4–8)

Whether or not children are of God's elect, Christian parents should expect them to behave in accordance with God's mandates while under the care and jurisdiction of their parents. As time goes by and they are steeped in the principles and tenets of the faith, if God grants them new birth, there will be no need to cajole them to embrace the faith fully: they will seek out ways to satisfy their

hunger and thirst for righteousness. Rushdoony makes this point in his discussion of election when he notes,

[O]ur election is not our choice, but God's choice. St. Paul tells us that, apart from our election and salvation in Jesus Christ, we are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13). Dead men cannot make choices. The sinner, insofar as any ability to save himself is concerned, is a dead man. He is given over to death and hell. His salvation is a miracle, and miracles are certainly not made by sinners or dead men!²

An Earthly Illustration

Recently I asked my youngest daughter to tell me when she knew that she was a Schwartz. At first, she gave me an erudite answer, "I never had any doubt I was a Schwartz." I told her not to evaluate in hindsight, but to tell me her first recollection that she was part of our particular family and not another. After thinking a short while, she said she knew she was a member of our family when she was around other families whose children could have as much candy and as many treats as they wanted *and* who were not required to ask permission before they did. She also noted that since our family observed the Biblical dietary laws, she was not always free to eat anything at a church potluck, friends' homes, or extended family gatherings, but needed to inquire what was in a particular dish so she could eat or not eat accordingly. These seemingly small matters helped her see her identity.³

When she was very young, her dad and I made sure she knew her name and where she lived in case she ever got lost, but the realization of her identity came when she viewed herself in a greater context than our family. She was never under the impression that she had chosen which family she was born into, or that she had established the rules and regulations that were a part of membership in our family. She grew into an understanding of her role as daughter and sister, and embraced these roles more fully as she matured and attained greater comprehension. We did not have to

2. Rousas John Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), Vol. 1, 522.

3. Our children were also taught not to use either of these Schwartz distinctives as a way to act in a superior or an inferior manner. These were family rules, and the children were expected to comply without "attitude."

persuade her to be a Schwartz. She was a Schwartz, and as she matured, that became more and more real.

In a like matter, we do not determine if and when we are going to be born again. This is supremely an act of God in us and in our children. From a parental point of view, we provide the context and guidelines for being a covenant child, and as the child matures, he embraces this identity, even if he is unable to pinpoint the exact moment of his conversion. However, if he has been raised with the knowledge of God's law being the governing rule of conduct, then when the reality of his heart of stone being turned into a heart of flesh becomes apparent (Ezek. 36:26), he is better able to understand the tutoring he had received that led to comprehending the magnitude of his conversion. It is in this way that Christian family culture is nurtured.

Christian Family Culture

Henry R. Van Til noted that *culture is religion externalized*. Thus, every Christian family has a family culture that either reflects God's law-word as the starting and ending points for all actions and decisions, or it does not. As God's law-word is taken seriously, decisions regarding educational choices, where the family will live, selection of friends, and the choice of a church congregation will be dictated by that standard. Although rarely exercised in a fully consistent manner, our goal should be to treat God's directives not as a smorgasbord from which to choose, or according to our personal likes and dislikes, but as fully authoritative, setting aside personal preferences.

As God's foundational institution, the health of the Biblical family will be the barometer of the health of the church, the state, and the health of the culture in general. When Scripture is the standard, the Christian family becomes a strong foundation and a strong participant in all cultural institutions. It is in *this* context that the doctrine of election can have the greatest impact.

[W]e are not only *chosen* by God the Son, but *ordained* by Him. To *ordain* (*tithemi*) means to appoint to a particular form of service. It is a serious distortion of Scripture to limit the meaning and scope of salvation and ordination to our rescue from reprobation. Such a

focus is common to Calvinists and Arminians alike; men are saved from wrath, from hell, and are redeemed for heaven, we are often told. This is a dangerous partial truth which results in humanism. It reduces the goal of salvation to man, and man's security, whereas Our Lord declares that it points beyond us.⁴

This ordination to service necessitates that Christian parents embrace the reality of the war that has been ongoing since the Fall of man and will extend until the culmination of history. Indicative of their resolve to be counted among those on the Lord's side will be the Christian education of their children, acquainting the children with and equipping them for the daily battles for their hearts and minds. Since the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, His people are *daily* involved in a war between principalities and powers in high places that are intensely opposed to letting the light of the Christian family and its individual members advance in the culture and claim ground for Jesus Christ. Covenant children need to understand that as Christians, their light (the reflected light of Jesus Christ) is in view wherever they go. Rather than believe they can make truces with the devil, they need to appreciate that their very presence in a covenant household places them on the scope of God's enemies.

As they move in and through a dark world, they will be targeted by the powers of darkness and evildoers who do all in their power to marginalize Christians, move them off the narrow path, and promote defeat. Those who decide to "remain neutral" in this conflict, wishing to play it safe, should realize there are no God-free zones. Either they are for Christ or against Him; there is no middle ground. The enemies of God know this; it is time that the Christian family realizes this fully.

The Full Armor of God

Christian children need to be taught that the entire earth is contested ground and usurpers can only be effectively challenged with the weapons ordained for this warfare—the full armor of God (Eph. 6:11–17). These are the very weapons that God's enemies hope God's children never discover, or if discover, never use! For

4. Rushdoony, Vol. 1, 522.

when Christians stand in truth, with righteousness, ready to share the good news of Jesus Christ according to His rules for establishing a godly culture, God's enemies on earth and in the spiritual realms are rightly disturbed. Their strategy to win the turf war is to convince the people of God not to fight!

Protected by our faith, which is our shield, strengthened by the helmet of salvation, which directs our thoughts and undergirds our knowledge, Christian families thus apply the law-word of God (our sword, or weapon of attack) to individual lives and our culture as a whole. This is how we destroy the strongholds of the enemy where unbelief and wickedness rule, so that the truth of God's Word can bring forth healing.

If one is not schooled in these realities, and is taught instead a nicey-nice religion of compromise, watered-down doctrine, and appeasement, the enemies of God have much less to worry about. However, when ambassadors of Christ move in their various positions and influence their individual spheres, the victory that the Bible teaches Christ won at Calvary will be increasingly visible.

As we teach and pray the Lord's Prayer, we are proclaiming the victory accomplished by the cross and sealed with the resurrection and ascension. That is why this prayer ends with the acclamation: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." God already knows this about Himself. We repeat it in acknowledgment that we are part of that victory. In our own strength, we are no match for the devil. However, in the power of the risen Christ, the devil flees from us (James 4:7).

Take Off the Blinders —Put On the Glasses

The lies that permeate our culture are meant to discourage and sidetrack the people of God. Even those who witnessed Jesus' death remained covered in a room and ineffective Kingdom workers until they were given spiritual eyes to see and ears to hear what their physical eyes and ears had seen and heard. When the blinders came off and the glasses of God's Word were used, thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit, the disciples turned the world upside down. It is no different today. Although our situation seems dire,

we have no business proceeding in the Lord's service with a defeatist attitude. We must come into the presence of the living God with thanksgiving in our hearts and into His throne room with words of praise on our lips. The good news is that the enemy has been defeated and we are privileged to be a part of the clean up operation to establish the crown rights of Jesus.

[T]o become productive, we obey God's commandments (John 15:14). To be productive in Jesus Christ is not a vague and gushy fact: it is the reality of taking God's law-word seriously and applying it to every area of life and thought.⁵

Discerning the Battleground

It is a romantic illusion that the turf wars exist only out in the culture. While it is true that the hijacked arena of the university and the morally reprobate mass media are competing for the hearts and minds of young people, the devil can have a field day in families where God's authority structure is abandoned and the interpersonal relationships of family members are not governed by God's law-word.

How many perceive themselves to be faithful servants of Christ when it comes to dealing with strangers and potential converts, but have no compunction about dishonoring a parent or failing to fully nurture and train their children? Unfortunately, too many have bought into the idea that holiness need not be of primary importance as they deal within their family culture. Can we bear fruit elsewhere if we do not bear fruit in our families?

[O]ur Lord tells us that we are ordained *to bear fruit*, to be productive. We are compared here to fruit trees; a good tree bears fruit. A little earlier, our Lord compares us to the branches of a vine, Himself, "the true vine" (John 15:1). Again, the emphasis is not on being in the Lord or in the vine, but on bearing fruit. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it might bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2). Thus, God either casts us, as dead branches, into the fire (John 15:6), or else He prunes to make us more productive. Very plainly, all of God's dealings with us are designed, not to give us comfort in our salvation, but to make us productive. We cannot resist that purging and pruning without

5. Rushdoony, Vol. 1, 523.

resisting God. Our desire to have a comfortable corner and an easy life have no standing before Him.⁶

It is an illusion that one can bear fruit elsewhere if such is not evident within the family environment. That is why hands-on, responsible parenting involves making this a number one priority.

The Promised Land

When Jesus commissioned the church prior to His ascension, He expanded the scope of the Promised Land to include the entire world. As we fully engage in the turf war that we find ourselves in, we can take comfort and direction from the words originally given to Joshua to be shared with the families of Israel,

3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

5. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest.

8. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Josh. 1:3, 5–9)

As we go and make disciples of all nations, let us remember that the covenant children of Christian families have an enormous role to play in the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As they are taught the reality of their depravity and the awesome grace of God to save, they will be better equipped to silence the foe and the avenger (Ps. 8).

6. Rushdoony, Vol. 1, 523.

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THE MINISTRY OF CHALCEDON

CHALCEDON (kal-see-don) is a Christian educational organization devoted exclusively to research, publishing, and cogent communication of a distinctively Christian scholarship to the world at large. It makes available a variety of services and programs, all geared to the needs of interested ministers, scholars, and laymen who understand the propositions that Jesus Christ speaks to the mind as well as the heart, and that His claims extend beyond the narrow confines of the various institutional churches. We exist in order to support the efforts of all orthodox denominations and churches. Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: "Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man...." This formula directly challenges every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative: Christ alone can announce that, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of true human freedom (Galatians 5:1).

The Chalcedon Foundation publishes books under its own name and that of Ross House Books. It produces a magazine, *Faith for All of Life*, and a newsletter, *The Chalcedon Report*, both bimonthly. All gifts to Chalcedon are tax deductible. For complimentary trial subscriptions, or information on other book titles, please contact:

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