

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of June 10, 2018

THEME: "Earthly Family"

FAMILY TREE

Sunday **Read Genesis 2:18-25**

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife." God started the human race with a family: a husband and his wife! It was by them that God would replenish the earth as mentioned in Genesis 1:27-28 with this explanation and instruction: *"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth..."* They started what we now make reference to as a family tree. Although we think of the family tree of those among our ancestors that can be traced. But the truth is that all of us would have to place Adam and Eve at the top of our family trees if we traced our roots all the way back. That point is emphasized in Acts 17:24-46: *"God made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth...And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of all the earth."* So in one sense, all on the earth are part of one big family: the earthly family of which we have an intimacy with our own household and its extension. In this creation and union of Adam and Eve, one could say that it was God who officiated at the first wedding. This marriage was His idea, and, I think, that is true for all people who have become part of His family by faith in Christ.

LOVE: THE FOUNDATION

Monday **Read Ephesians 5:22-32**

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." That command may well have been the same as given at the union of Adam and Eve in their wedding in the garden of Eden back where God told Adam this in Genesis 2:24: *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife."* Yes, the love of a man for his wife causes him, if he is going to obey God to cleave to her through thick and thin. That means he will allow nothing to separate him from his love for his wife because his love is the kind of love that Christ loves the church, the people that have entered into a personal relationship with Him. What kind of love is the love of Christ. That is important because that is the kind of love between spouses should set the base for the home. That is the kind of love that the children with whom God blesses the home should witness. If children are witness to the love of Christ as demonstrated between their parents, they have learned what may well be the most important lesson in life: the love of Christ for His Church. Now if his wife is determined to separate despite all his efforts to keep it together, there is not much a man can do if he has tried everything, then his attempts at "cleaving" will have failed, but God saw the effort he made, and was probably pleased about the effort he made. But that love should start at the beginning of the union, so the woman does not even have to entertain the thought of leaving. So, I guess, when there is divorce, it may well be that both parties contributed. But, divorce is not God's idea in the beginning. True love patiently and persistently deals with problems to fix them. That is what Christ does because He will not allow anything to separate us from Him: praise God!

RESPECTIVE ROLES

Tuesday **Read I Peter 3:1-7**

"Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands...Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto his wife." These instructions to the husband and wife in the marriage relationship are an assignment of responsibility and not an indication of responsibility. The devil has promoted an idea of male superiority which is a complete distortion of truth, the devil's favorite tactic. Any organization must have an authority defining roles, or there will be disorganization and even chaos. Somebody must be ultimately responsible, and God holds the husband responsible for having the home be what He wants it to be. A man's wife is very important, and no one knows that better than her husband. That is the very reason God gave man a wife! Remember: *"It is not good that man should be alone."* Ephesians 5:21 emphasizes that submission must be mutual: *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."* That same mutuality is true for the special commands God gave to the husband in Ephesians 5:25 and the verse in today's Bible reading above: *"Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it...Give honor to his wife."* I see these commands as points of

emphasis to each partner, but they surely are to be mutual. Should not a wife love and honor her husband the same as he should submit to her? Both, however, should keep in mind that God in the end holds the man responsible, not to lord over, but to serve!

CHILDREN

WednesdayRead Genesis 1:27-28

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth..." The most important command of God in His plans for His earth was to have families as is indicated in this Scripture in the account of God's creation. He could have made multiple men and woman had He chosen to do so. Why did He allow one couple to be the progenitors of the whole human race? Only God knows, but I have to think that He wanted to give the comradery of a family, that we are a human family that should be caring for each other and looking out for each other. Nationalities of different languages and races of different color would be in the future, but only for God's purposes. He certainly did not allow them to come into existence to be competitors. As a matter of fact, we can conclude from Genesis 11 that God brought these differences to make it less likely that humans would not be successful in their attempts to replace God as the Supreme Ruler of the earth. That was always the goal of Satan, and the reason he was tossed out of heaven. The differences were meant to squelch the opposition to God; the hope of God is to have humans live in peace, in harmony and unity. That is the ultimate goal and will happen when Jesus comes again to rule the earth. In the meantime, God's people should try to promote peace among all!

HEAVENLY HERITAGE

ThursdayRead Psalm 127:3-5

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hands of a mighty man, so are children of thy youth." An heritage is made up of precious traditions that are passed along to future generations to maintain the memory of the family. That is God's purpose in bringing children into the family; and the implication is that the primary heritage is the *"heritage of the Lord."* The traditions established by God should supersede any earthly family traditions that we may have on earth. That is not to say that family traditions are wrong, they are precious. But God's ways are even more important and should never be compromised. Children are arrows: what a metaphor that is! But a study of the Indian culture, for whom arrows were a major instrument in their culture, gives me a better understanding of this literary device. Arrows must be well balanced if they are going to hit the target; and they must be aimed at the proper target because they can result in unintended consequences otherwise. Arrows should never be left in the hands of the enemy or they may come back to cause harm. Broken arrows should be fixed, never left where someone else can use them against you. Finally, arrows, after being properly aimed, must be released or you will never know if they hit the target! God parenting is much like good archery!

WORK OF GOD

FridayRead Psalm 139:13-14

"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." God is explaining to us through the psalmist that the child in the womb is His creation! It is God who made our bodies the way He wants! It is God who formed us with the basic personality and talents and abilities He wants us to have to fulfill His plans for our lives! How do we know that God has a plan for our lives? Check out Jeremiah 1:5: *"Before I formed you in the belly I knew you, and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and ordained you to be a prophet unto the nations."* We are told in II Timothy 3:16 that *"All scripture is given for our instruction;"* that includes this verse in the Old Testament. God arranged who our parents would be, and if children honor their parents, it will go well with them as promised in Ephesians 6:2-3: *"Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee."* Even if parents are not honorable, God will be honored, and you blessed!

BROTHERLY LOVE

SaturdayRead John 1:38-42

"He first findeth his own brother." One of the best ways to honor parents is to show brotherly love. And one of the ways, arguably the best way, is to bring your siblings to Christ. That is what Andrew did with his brother Peter as we read in today's Bible reading. It turned out that Peter was mightily used of God in early days of the Church Age. Andrew must have been well pleased and so happy that he brought him to meet Jesus. This brotherly act of kindness will probably result in his being rewarded in heaven in addition to the joy of seeing how God used his brother on earth. How about the brotherly love displayed by Joseph, who returned the evil of his brothers into an opportunity to show love upon their reunion after they had treated him so harshly with hate.