

## **FAMILY LEADERSHIP FOR WHICH THE LORD IS LOOKING**

In Chapter 10 of John's Gospel Jesus says, *"I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives up his life for his sheep. Hired workers are not like the shepherd. They don't own the sheep, and when they see a wolf coming, they run off and leave the sheep. Then the wolf attacks and scatters the flock. Hired workers run away because they don't care about the sheep."*

*"I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me. Just as the Father knows me, I know the Father, and give up my life for my sheep" John 10:11-15.*

How are you to be the shepherd of your family that Jesus calls you to be? As always, you must look to Jesus. The secret of Jesus' success was that he only did what he saw the Father doing. In the same way, you need to keep reminding yourself that it is Jesus who is the good shepherd. He is doing the work through his Spirit whom he has sent. Your job is to do what he is doing -- what you see him doing.

What is it that the good shepherd is doing that he wants you to do? He tells you in his Word, and it starts with your family.

You must exhibit an active commitment to and a personal relationship with your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

You must develop or exhibit spiritual maturity, with teaching and leadership ability tested and proven in your own family that will allow for growth and maturity in those under you.

You must be a good father model. *You should be serious, straightforward, truthful, just, holy, modest, a lover of goodness, irreproachable and blameless, of steady, even temper, a man of peace, self-controlled, gentle and not violent, not contentious or self-willed, not someone who loves money, not given to greed, hospitable, a faithful husband, a good manager of your own household, able to keep your children under control without sacrificing your dignity, a father of children who are believers and who are known not to be wild or insubordinate, a good teacher who holds fast to authentic doctrine, well thought of by those outside the community of believers 1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9.*

These are the Scriptural requirements for spiritual leaders in the Church, and no one should be in a responsible position of leadership who does not meet them or is not striving for them. Unfortunately, many are but should not be followed. The training ground for leadership in the Church is the home and the family. These requirements should be your goals as a father while you provide leadership over your family.

It is important for you to understand the fundamental truth about your position and role in your family: God has set you in leadership over your wife and children and will hold you responsible for that leadership. You can either run from it or get help in learning how to

be a Godly leader in your home for you are either leading your family to God or you are leading them away from him. You are leading them in love or you are leading them in the way of your own selfishness.

Here are sixteen steps that will help you provide spiritual leadership for your family:

1. Set an example: practice first what you preach and expect.
2. Make sound and timely decisions based upon the Scriptures and the will of God.
3. Pursue your responsibility and take responsibility for your actions. When you are wrong, ask God's forgiveness and direction. By the way, when was the last time you said you were wrong and asked your wife's or children's forgiveness?
4. Commit yourself totally to your wife and children even if it means dying for them. Their security requires that they know that you will do this.
5. Gather together the children that the Lord brings into your home and carry them in your arms - emotionally and spiritually - until they are strong enough to walk on their own.
6. Pray and intercede for your wife and children and stand against all the forces of Satan that would attack or infiltrate your family.
7. Protect your wife and children from the philosophies and ideas and values of this world that do not provide healthy food for their minds and spirits. Start with the TV, VCR or DVD player, and the Internet. What kind of movies and programs do you watch? Would you want your children to watch them with you or do what is being done in the movies and programs you watch?
8. Protect your wife and children from the influence of those who would stray and go off on their own or do their own thing, even if they call themselves Christians.
9. Protect your wife and children when they are being criticized or attacked either by the world or by other Christians.
10. Lead your wife and children to good, refreshing spiritual food and drink, beginning with God's Word, the Bible.
11. Discern the spiritual condition of your wife and children in order to look out for their welfare. What is the one thing that is uppermost on the heart of your wife right now? Of your children?
12. Help your wife and children discover God's will for their lives because in doing his will they will find rest.

13. Determine your wife's and children's gifts and capabilities, both natural and spiritual, and develop them accordingly.

14. Discipline your wife and children with the rod of correction and the staff of the authority that God has given you. Even if they don't like your correction or discipline, do it because it gives them freedom and security. However, it is God's authority you are exercising, so be careful not to abuse it. You will be held accountable for how you use it. You are to be a leader, not a dictator.

15. Keep your wife and children informed of your own needs and concerns. They can help and support you even in difficult times if you share openly with them.

16. Share what you have with your wife and children when they need it -- in abundance, if necessary, and cheerfully.