

1 Timothy 3: 4 and 5; "Ruling His own House Well", (Part 2), Sermon # 14 in the series on the Eldership, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 20th, 2010, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

The last time I preached to you from this text I spoke to you about the prospective candidate for the Eldership's exercise of authority in the home, in terms of the child's learning to obey. The Father should learn to exercise an authority which makes it advisable for the child to obey. He must have the wisdom to make it reasonable to obey, and he must have and demonstrate a love that makes it a delight to obey. Not that it is always easy to obey, but when the Father sets a good example as Abraham did, in offering up his son Isaac, as it is recorded for us in Genesis 22, we found that Isaac did not struggle and scream and say, "Dad you're crazy, you're a religious fanatic, no one would ever do something like this to his son." Isaac had come to realize that his father's God was his God, and he knew that under normal circumstances God would never expect anyone to offer their son up as a burnt offering. He understood that here in these circumstances, God had commanded it as an act of faith and worship. He was testing Abraham to see if he loved Him pre-eminently. However, we know the end of the story. God stopped Abraham from going through with the offering up of his son, and instead, we know, that He went on, in history, to offer up His own Son; our Lord Jesus Christ. But I am saying, that Isaac was a willing participant in Abraham's obedience. That was because he taught him well and he loved him much. So too, in the church; the people in the church become willing participants in the outworking of the Elder's obedience, and they willing follow His lead as he follows Christ, and obeys God, and loves the people of the church much.

Now this afternoon, I would like to open up the subject of what ruling well in one's own household involves. And what I would like to set before you is this statement: A man will be ruling his own house well when he engages in the practical duties which are given to all fathers, raising his children according to Biblical teaching. I am going to be giving to you 3 practical duties which are seen in fathers which, in a similar sense, will transfer over into the Christian ministry. I will only preach this afternoon on one of the three duties. I will take one duty per sermon and in this way I think that we will all come to better understand what God is looking for from the prospective candidate for the ministry, and in all the other families of the church as well. In all of these duties I am assuming that there will be a good working unity and agreement between a husband and a wife concerning all that the father is doing. If there is not; in whatever duty there is disagreement, the father will be ineffectual and largely unsuccessful in seeing God's truth make progress in his family's life. All that the father does and expects in the family in relation to the wife and children must be done with love and with real concern for their physical and

spiritual well-being; in order that God may be honored. He is not a tyrant in his home. A tyrant only wants to look good to others, but he will not love them or want to win their respect. But a righteous man will love them and want to win their respect. It will be the same for the man who wants to serve in the church. My three points are these. 1st - Ruling his own house well will involve a man's attempting to provide well, materially and spiritually, for his family. 2^{ndly} - Ruling his own house well will involve his learning submission to God's Word and His authority, in regard to himself, before he attempts to exercise Biblical authority over his own household and in the church. And 3^{rdly}- Ruling his own house well will involve establishing a reverence or a dignity in the outworking of this submission.

Well, this afternoon, let's look 1st of all at the truth that ruling one's house well will involve the man's learning to provide well, materially and spiritually, for his own family.

We can see this principle of truth clearly enunciated for us over in 1 Timothy 5, verse 8, if you will glance over there with me. "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." A father is one who provides materially and spiritually for his household those things which are needful and good, out of what the Lord enables him to acquire by diligence and honest efforts. Let's look at a few verses to confirm this. Proverbs 10, verses 4 and 5 - "He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich." "He who gathers in summer is a wise son; he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame." Here you can see that a man who doesn't work hard will become poor. Sometimes I think that prospective candidates for the ministry think that it is not necessary for them to learn any skill besides what they are taught in Seminary. But I believe that having a skill and a calling to work with your hands is a very good way to learn to provide for your household, whether it is before, during, or after a man goes to Seminary. Perhaps the man will never go to a Seminary. This has been the case with me, and I have personally found working with my hands to be very beneficial in the development of character and in providing for the needs of my family for 30 years of my married life, and a necessary supplement to the income paid to me by this church even while I have been a pastor. The Apostle Paul was a tent-maker, and yet no one would question his indefatigable labors in the ministry. The ministry comes first. But it is a good thing to have the ability to work skillfully with your hands as well. It is good to learn to work hard and diligently to provide for the needs of your family. Putting these good principles into play in your life, young man, will help you become a man who can, and will be able to, lead his family. Laziness brings a man, and his family, to poverty. This is not to say that a man cannot be poor and yet be righteous. Certainly there are many men who are poor in this world who are righteous. "Blessed are the poor" for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. But we are speaking now of the physical care of the family by the head of the household.

Look over at Proverbs 13: 4. "The soul of the lazy man desires and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich." You can see in this verse that the

diligence of a man will also pay spiritual dividends. His soul is made rich. He has many good things stored up for many years, spiritually, because he has been diligent, not only in his work, but also in the study of the Word of God. Even a person who is not given to reading should read the Word of God regularly. If that is the only book that you ever read, it will do you good all your days, in every situation, and especially in learning to rule your own household well. Joshua 1: 8 says, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it." "For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." A lazy man may have many desires to do and to become many things, but if he never takes the initiative to actually go out to do something that he believes that God would approve of, he may never amount to anything. The Christian man is God's servant first, and that service extends to the job that he pursues and obtains. And then it will matter very much whether he will work at it diligently and wisely so that his family will be provided for, and God be glorified through his labors. Men's callings are of God. Not many men will become ministers. But the principles of diligence and hard work still apply to all Christian men.

Look at Proverbs 13: 11. "Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase." Here the principle of dishonesty is exposed for what it is. If a man gains money dishonestly, it will not be blessed of God and it not increase. It will only diminish, or grow smaller. But the person who labors honestly will see increase. A man's income may not be great, but he will attempt to do with it what he must, and what he can, to provide for his family. God will bless the honest income and will actually give increase by it, because He is great enough that He can build upon what seems to us to be small. In our society, this will mean that he will try to provide suitable housing, clothing, transportation, and food for his family. He may indeed have to take out loans to accomplish the housing and the transportation needs, but if he does this, he does it in the fear of God. He remembers the words of Psalm 37: 21 – "The wicked borrows and does not repay; the righteous shows mercy and gives." These words, I believe, could also be read conversely. If the righteous borrows, he will repay; the wicked does not show mercy and does not give. The righteous man is able to be poor and still shows mercy and gives. This the grace of God at work in him. He knows that he must be faithful to repay anything that he does borrow. He can only borrow that which he fully intends to pay back. Regular, reasonable, monthly installments large enough to actually accomplish this, are the best policy. Interest rates should be carefully looked into. He also knows the value of saving money if possible. Learning good spending habits and saving money if possible, are the good stewardship activities of a wise father. Good planning to achieve financial goals shows wisdom as well. And tithing and teaching your children to give and to be generous are setting a good example for all in this regard. It goes a long way to show the children and young people in your family what God is really looking for; He is looking for a cheerful giver, not a cheerful hoarder.

But for a man to be an elder, he must also be a good provider spiritually as well. He must know, and have thought about it practically, that he will take time to spend with his wife and children. He will not be working 7 days a week or long hours into the evening where he cannot see them and talk with them. He must not become a slave to his work, but he should know himself to be servant of Christ. Colossians Chapter 3, and verse 23 says, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.; for you serve the Lord." A godly father should work hard, and at times long, but he should never think that overworking makes him a good provider. Furthermore, the head of the house should be one who works to prepare and to provide spiritual food from God's Word to give to God's people. Many men think that they would like to teach others, but when you ask them about their family devotions, they don't do them much; perhaps not at all. That kind of thinking shows a lack of thought. If you can't speak the Word to your family at home; how will you do it for the church? Real devotion requires time and preparation. So does real preaching. Look with me at Matthew 24: 45-51. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?" "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing." "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods." "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming, and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.'" "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The food that is being talked about here is the milk, the meat, and the honey of God's Word. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. This food is given to God's people and others in due season; certainly weekly on the Lord's Day by the minister; but also by the heads of households to their families, on the other days of the week. The prospective elder must be ready to preach the Word in season and out of season; to convince, to rebuke, to exhort with all longsuffering. But so must the head of the family do the same, according to the ability which God has given him; so let him do it. The one who serves the good food of the Word of God to people, whether it is in his family or in the church, is not to be beating his fellow servants with the Word, or with his words, but rather to feed them; to give them their food; their portion, in due season. He will give them the spiritually nutritional food that will build them up in their faith, strengthen them to do God's will, and that which will motivate them to engage themselves in service to Christ in the multitude of ways that He is looking for them to serve Him in the home, in the church, and in society at large.

He will also provide counseling and companionship to the needy of the flock at critical times. He will attempt to be there to pray for and support them in times of trial. All this is something has grown out of the way that he provides for his family in the home. He has watched out for their highest welfare. He has watched over his

children in this loving and holy way that we have spoken about here today, before his name was ever brought up for consideration for the office of an elder. If he can care and provide for them; if he has the gift of teaching and is faithful in his stewardship of the use of it in his home, then perhaps he is ready to preach and lead and rule in the church. This is the 1st of the practical duties of the father in the home that will in a broader sense transfer into the ministry. We will look at 2 more in the weeks to come.