

1 Timothy 3: 4 and 5; "Ruling his own House Well" (Part 3), Sermon # 15 in the series on the Eldership, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 4th, 2010, In the Afternoon Worship Service.

What does ruling your own house well involve? That is the question which we have been addressing. And we spoke last week of the 1st practical duty of a father – He is one who will be a good provider for his wife and children. This does not mean that he will be striving to be rich, but rather, as I have attempted to show you, he will be providing materially and spiritually for his family by diligent and honest efforts. We saw that diligence and hard work coupled with good stewardship will be the way that a godly man can provide for his family. We saw that loaning money is not forbidden in the Word of God; but that it should be done in the fear of God, remembering that the borrower is the lender's slave. And remembering too, that we should only loan what we can reasonably and regularly pay back, and that in a timely fashion. Now, this afternoon with God's help, I will open up to you the 2nd practical duty of a father which will transfer over from the home into the church, should he become an elder. It is this. The one who rules well in his household should expect, and have, submission to himself from his children. We see this in verse 4 – the phrase – "having his children in submission." For the children to be in submission in the father-child relationship is for the father to gently but firmly bring them under his fatherly authority in relation to right and wrong in their behavior. He does this by patient teaching and the use of loving correction including the use of the rod or spanking stick when rebellion and disobedience take place. Bringing about this submission involves, in every case, the graces of humility (the proper view of one's self, and also one's own place in relation to others). And it also involves the father's having his own proper regard for the Biblically ordained authorities in his life.

1st of all - True submission in the Christian family starts with the Father being in submission to God and to His Word.

The man who is the head of the house should fear God. He should have a proper regard for God Himself as the ultimate authority in his life. He should not be considering himself as the final and ultimate authority. Look with me at Exodus Chapter 5, verse 1. "Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" "And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?' "I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us." "Please let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest He fall upon with pestilence or with the sword." "Then the king of Egypt said to them, 'Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work?' "Get back to your labor." "And Pharaoh

said, 'Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor!'" "So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying 'You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before.'" "Let them go and gather straw for themselves." "And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before." "You shall not reduce it." "For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'" "Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words." You can see here how dangerous it is when a man comes into leadership who sees himself as the final authority in his life. When God commands Pharaoh to let His people go, he says, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" He is going to be a perfect tyrant. The children of Israel are helping Pharaoh to build something, but it is not named. So, too, when the members of family have a father who is a tyrant, it is because he fears what the children may become, if he doesn't keep them in line. They don't know why they are bearing heavy burdens and forced to make bricks without straw. They do not know why they are blamed for everything and beaten up with words or blows. They don't know anything of a father's affection or love in his commands. They simply come to hear and to know that they do not measure up.

Now this is a characteristic which, if a man becomes an elder, has very dire consequences. If a man does not have the fear of God; if he cannot submit to God or regard His commands, he will make himself the end of all his efforts, and the end of all the efforts of all the people who are under his authority. The glory of God and the cause of Christ, and obeying God, for the right reasons, and having the right motives for leading people to do things and to accept responsibilities, will all be trampled in the dust. If a man is going to be a good leader in his own household, or in the church, God will teach him the value of sincerity and honest dealing by placing him in circumstances which will show him the great value of those qualities being exhibited in his own life and in the lives of those with whom he has his closest dealings. You see an example of this in the life of Jacob in the Old Testament in Genesis 31: 3, if you will turn there with me. You will recall the reasons why Jacob had come to Haran in the first place. He had played the trickster in his youth, and he had deceived his brother Esau out of his birthright and his blessing. Esau had been angry with Jacob for this; angry enough to kill him. So his mother sent him away to her brother Laban's place in Haran, for what she thought would be a few days. It was 20 years. During that time, Jacob was dealt with by Laban as he had dealt with Esau; in a very tricky manner. You will recall that he worked 7 years for Laban for his daughter Rachel, but then on his wedding night Laban gave him Leah instead. Although God did not approve of this deception, He did permitting it and overrule this evil for Jacob's good, so that he would change and become the kind of man who would be a good leader in his own household. By the way, this is what he does with all Christian fathers. He so orders the circumstances that we come to learn the important lessons of how to love and care for people in a way that honors Him. But the time finally came when

God knew that Jacob had learned the lessons that he needed to learn and this is where we take up our reading now, in verse 3 – "Then the Lord said to Jacob, 'Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you.'" "So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me." "And you know that with all my might I have served your father." "Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me." "If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled." "And if he said thus, "the streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked." "So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me." (You see, in this Jacob was acting straightforwardly and legitimately to overcome all the unrighteous manipulation that Laban was trying to use to earn more than he should from Jacob's labor.) It was not right for Laban to change Jacob's wages ten times. What we promise a person, that we will pay them, is what we should indeed pay them. Laban had not done this, but God protected Jacob. In doing this, God was teaching Jacob sincerity in his own business dealings and personal relationships.

If you look over at verse 41 of this same chapter, you will find out just how important this protection and teaching was to Jacob. Jacob and his wives have taken all that belonged to them and they have fled away from Laban, but Laban pursues them and overtakes them and questions Jacob as to why he has done this. Jacob says, "Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times." "Unless the God of my father the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed." "God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night." Now we need to learn a lesson from both of these men. Some men, who are heads of households, use their wives and children for their own profit and advantage for years, and then when they die, they leave them with nothing, after all is said and done. And some men will work hard and build with all that God has given them, and have something to give them and leave it to them in the end. God will superintend the ends of both according to their submission to Himself. All of us who are heads of households must ask ourselves this question: Am I submitting to God's authority, the authority of His word and teaching in my life? Am I submitting to learn what He would teach me, even through those men in my life who might at times seem to be unreasonable, or who are even wrong in their dealings with me? I am not saying that we should submit to what is wrong, or tolerate indefinitely tyrannical authority. Jacob finally left Laban's employ. But I am asking, are you learning what God would have you to learn about how to have sincere and straightforward personal and business dealings in relation to your being the head of your house, and in your dealings with other men around you?

Then perhaps you may indeed be raised up to be an elder, if this and the other qualifications are met.

2ndly – True submission of children in a Christian family is coming about when the father is confronting sin in his children when he sees it.

Look at 2 Samuel 23, verses 1-7. "Now these are the last words of David." "Thus says David the son of Jesse; thus says the man raised up on high." "The anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel: The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue." "The God of Israel spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue." "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me; He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." "And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain." "Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered and secure, for this all my salvation and all my desire; will He not make it increase?" "But the sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands." But the man who touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, and they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place." Certainly these are marvelous words. The one who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And certainly these words apply best to our Lord Jesus Christ who is just and the Supreme ruler over men; having His own children (that is, His spiritual children) in submission to Himself and through Himself to God the Father. But David says that his house is not like Christ in some respects. David did some things wrong in the way that he raised his children, and it affected his rule. To have submissive children you must take the tangible steps of action and have an expectation that they will obey you the things related to their obedience to God. Look at 1 Kings 1: 5 and 6. "Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, 'I will be king'; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him." "(And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, 'Why have you done so?'" "He was also very good-looking." Adonijah, it says, exalted himself; never a good thing in God's sight. And it ought not to be tolerated or encouraged by any parent. He was going to be king. So he declared. He was going to take the rule to himself. And so, he prepared chariots and 50 men to run before him. But the comment of the writer, by the Holy Spirit, is very significant. Verse 6 – "And his father had not rebuked him at any time." The New American Standard translation says, "His father had never crossed him at any time." In the margin of that Bible it says, "He had never pained him". In the King James it says, "He had never displeased him." He never asked him, "Why are you doing this?"

Now parents, this is great part of having your children in submission. When you see them exalting themselves when they are young or when they are teenagers, you must confront them and ask them, "Why are you doing this?" The man who would have his children in submission must be a man who learns to confront sin in

his children when he sees it. Bad attitudes and scowling countenances and sullen looks and haughty eyes must be met with questions and corrections by the godly parent. In younger children appropriately administered spankings are in order. In older children, restraining them and curtailing their sinful activities by repeated confrontation and removal of privileges is definitely in order. I think of Eli in 1 Samuel 3: 13 – God says, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them." Eli had been informed of all of their sin, but neither as a father, nor especially as a high priest, did he restrain them. He ought to have reproved them and dismissed them from their office. John Gill says, " He did not knit his brows or wrinkle up his face, and by his countenance show his displeasure at their proceedings, but in an easy, smooth, gentle manner, expostulated with them about them." No, a godly father must ask for, and expect submission at all ages from his children as long as they are in his household. If they will not heed, then they must be confronted and disciplined. And if they will not be submissive to the rules of your house then as older teen; they may have to leave your house and face the consequences of their disobedience themselves. But it will be with tears in your eyes and pain in your heart if it has to be so. It is good to go to your children, as a father, when you see them going their own way and they will not listen to you; to take them aside in private and say, "Son, or daughter, will you not submit to me in this?" "Are you in submission to me in this?" That is God's way; that is their hearing the voice behind them saying, "This is the way, walk in it, whenever you turn to the right hand, or whenever you turn to the left," off the path of righteousness. (Isaiah 30: 20, 21) Children, your eyes see your teacher when you see your parents. They are representing the Lord Himself when they speak to you of what God expects of you; of your obedience to His Word; and then they ask you to obey their voice in relation to it. And I hope that you now can see, that the man who rules his own house well will have to do the same in the church if he becomes an elder. He will teach, confront, rebuke, exhort, and plead for submission to himself as the pastor who is giving them, Christ's sheep, His Word. But more important will be their seeing their greater submission to the Lord Himself, and their willingness to obey Him by faith.