

Building Strong Home Relationships

From a message by A. Wayne Rudolph
New England Valley Mennonite Church

This evening we are looking at the Building Strong Home Relationships.

Each of us live in a home there may be a few that do not interact with anyone specifically in their home because they live by themselves yet when we look at building strong home relationships we do influence others outside of our immediate home setting and we do relate to them.

How many of you like to or attending weddings? Why do you enjoy attending weddings? It is because you anticipate the blending, love, the flowing together of two individuals as God intended them to and because you can by faith believe that a good home relationship is responsible for these folks. When one of our daughters married, one of our neighbors was surprised at our joyfulness and they thought that we would be terrifically afraid and scared of the future. And why wouldn't they be because they know that there is about a 50% likelihood that any new home will not work and so they face the possibility of marriage and commitment with apprehension.

We live we built strong home relationships then those coming out of their homes will have a good foundation to build strong home relationships and the blessing of the Lord can continue.

It has been good for me to study this subject because when we look at something of this nature we become aware of our strengths and our weaknesses and somehow our weaknesses shine a little brighter and stronger it seems then our strengths, I guess it is better that we had major on them and look at them closer than at our strengths.

Well our aim tonight is to identify what good home relationships are and then to improve them, to stretch us a bit, to stimulate, to bolster good home relationships.

When we think of home we think of togetherness, we think of cooperation, we think of love, we think of where we are cared for, we think of blending,

there is just a number of things that we think about when we think about homes. If you were to give yourself a test and you would need to rate yourself as good, fair or poor in each of these categories what would you say?

Is your home one of tranquility and peace? Would you say good, fair, poor?

What about the degree of the blending together, have you learnt to cooperate and have a common interest and goal.

What about the communication level? Building strong home relationships certainly communication is at the heart of that.

What about in achieving the goals that we set out to accomplish or what about sacrificial love? That was spoken of several times this evening already.

What we build at home is the most basic of building blocks in one's society and when we think about building good home relationships a variety of situations come to our mind. There may be just a home or two that only consists of two people but I see that most of your homes consist of more than that and those that start out with just two end up no doubt with just two most often. And so we are going to look at some principles that help couples to build a strong relationship and we are going to look at some principles that relate to us as couples that have children.

Building Strong Home Relationships. We are emphasizing the building aspect this evening.

In a building there is a process taking place, in a building effort, it takes time, it takes effort, there is a plan, there is a work, there is an object to achieve and so we are looking at the emphasis this evening of building.

I would like to look for just a few moments at what is a strong home. What is a strong home?

To start with let's raise this question: Can a home be strong that de-emphasizes relationships, can it? Keep that question in the back of your mind, can a home be strong that de-emphasizes relationships?

Well what is a strong home, what makes a strong home, what are we looking at when we think about strength? Well we think about a home that is a pillar in a decadent society, like a lighthouse you would say. A strong home relationship would have to add to that radiance of light that goes out from that home, one that feels God's intended purpose of stability, love and support. A strong home is one that completes the individual because God said of Adam that it was not good for him to be alone but that He would make a helpmeet for him or suitable for completion of the individual. (Gen.2:18)

A strong home is where there is a caring disciplined atmosphere. Disciplined so that children can be raised in carefulness and rightness. A strong home is where there is a haven of support for up right living even in the midst of a hostile environment. The songwriter says: This world is not a friend to grace. And it isn't, but there is a friend to grace in the shelter of our home because we think alike and we are pulling together.

A strong home is where each member enjoys their time together. Where would you rather be at the end of a weary some stressful hard day then at home? Hopefully that would be every one of us hearts desire to be at home.

A strong home is one that reproduces the faith. Where there is a co-operation in reproducing the faith. A strong home is one that prepares for Christian commitment and service, a willingness to give for the good of others, where love and goodwill prevail, where convictions are developed that will guide for the remainder of one's life.

Now back to our first question: Can a home be strong that de-emphasizes relationships?

Well I think maybe it could have some strong points but if it does not emphasize relationships there is going to be a noticeable weakness. Home is intended to be a place of love and care, encouragement and support, we looked at that list already. But we are looking at building strong home relationships.

We would like to look at this idea of relationships just a bit.

The term relation or relating together is dealing with the attitude which persons assume towards each other, they relate together they interact, and so relationship is the state of affairs existing between those relating together. In other words how are things working is it smooth or bumpy, is there an agreement or conflict, is there cooperation or a pulling apart, is their interaction, is it healthy, is there blending and is there support?

A young couple was asked how home life was going or how married life is going shortly after their wedding day and a bystander said: It is too early to tell.

And that may be true to some degree and as this bystander said they probably did not draw into any real hard bumps yet.

But how can you end right if you don't start right? Some time along the way you have to get on the right course if you are going to end right and so God bless each home that starts right and stays on course so that it can end right. And it is certainly true that strong home relationships must be built they don't just happen. Anything worthwhile requires some discipline to achieve doesn't it? Certainly, life is full of disciplines.

Sometimes we ask young applicants when we interview them in preparation for baptism what is their relationship like at home with their parents, why do we ask a question like that? Well it is a fairly clear index as to whether they are actually applying Christian principles to the everyday living. Now we don't ask the child how their parents relationship is but do you think there is any connection between the parents relationship together and the child's relationship in that home? Was certainly there is. And so if mother and father have a poor relationship how can we expect this young Christian to have a healthy good relationship in the face of that?

When we say to have a good relationship at home we are thinking about have they learnt to submit, have they learnt to respect their parents, can they serve willingly, is the rate cooperation with the family plans in the family unit, is there a pulling together. You know so many times when folks think about the teenage years and adolescents they think of restlessness and a parting of ways and less and less in common instead of more and more in common. And it is true that adolescence has some challenges

but tonight we are looking at building strong home relationships that will carry us through the tide of those years as well.

Relationships are ever so important.

My father used to remind us children when it came to a job and holding a job that your best job security is to make yourself so useful that your employer will hardly know how he can get along without you. And I thought that is good advice, but that is true in every home setting as well that we ought to contribute so much and be such an asset to the home unit that we are a part of that we are treasured and not just tolerated. I pity any home unit where any member whether it's child, wife or husband that is only tolerated in that frame instead of treasured. So when we are building good solid home relationships we are thinking about each making a contribution where there would be a marked empty spot if any were missing.

Now for a bit of background this evening I jotted down just a number of references at random and I am going to read a short verse and somehow it tried to lift something out of it that would bear on this subject this evening. Now I didn't write these down in any particular order but I hand them out so we won't need to turn to them.

We are thinking about building strong home relationships and each one of these verses would like you to think with me is there any factor in these verses that you would say contributes or detracts from strong home relationships.

The first one is in first Samuel one where Samuel's mother brought little Samuel to Eli and she said: "For this child I prayed." (1 Sam.1:27) She remembered well that prayer session in Eli's presence, how Eli had thought at first she was drunken because she didn't say anything out loud only her lips moved. (1Sam.1:12-14) For this child I prayed. Do you think that contributed to strong home relationships? Why I am certainly sure it did.

In Judges chapter 13 we have another couple and they asked the angel that revealed that they were going to have a son this question: "How shall we order the child?" (Judges 13:12) Who were they taking direction from? Did that contribute to strong home relationships? Why certainly it did because their direction was coming from this source that knew all things.

Now in first Samuel 25 we have another glimpse into another home but this one is totally different. [First Samuel 25:25](#) says: "Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him." What do you expect that home to be like? Just a little glimpse and we know more about that home don't we? Folly contributed to a breakdown.

Psalm 127 verse three a very familiar verse

[Psalm 127:3](#)

Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is* his reward.

Does that concept contribute to building sound home relationships, strong home relationships? Why I think it does. To welcome children and to view them as an asset and a part of every home unit if the Lord so blesses.

In Proverbs 31 it says about the virtuous woman she shall do him good and not evil all the days of her life. ([Prov.31:12](#)) She is going to work for the best of every member of that home unit, a contribution? Definitely so. Did that happen by following human nature? No it happened by crucifying human nature and being selfless, being a servant and it's says at the close of that chapter that her husband sitteth in the gate ([Prov.31:23](#)) as a man worthy of listening to and her children rise up and call her blessed. ([Prov.31:28](#)) They had a relationship that blended and supported each other.

Proverbs 27 gives us a glimpse into another home setting, where verse 15 says a contentious woman and what's that like children, a contentious woman? It's says she is like a continual dripping on a very rainy day. ([Prov.27:15](#)) Now you children probably can't relate well to that because you live in homes where the roof doesn't leak but if you live in that type of houses they had in Palestine if it rained and rained and rained all day they were probably going to get a few drops dripping here and dripping there and this wouldn't work too well would it, you wouldn't know where to put things to keep them dry, but it says a contentious woman certainly wouldn't contribute to good relationships would she, No.

In Genesis 24 it says Isaac took Rebekah and she became his wife and he was comforted after his mother's death. There was a blending, that was a support to each other that statement mentions. ([Gen.24:67](#)).

Genesis 2 tells us that therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. ([Gen.2:24](#)) That term cleave indicates a bonding doesn't it, a commitment to each other that it is singular that keeps other relationships at bay.

[Colossians 3:19](#) says husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them. Actually here we have the positive and the negative coupled together. Now what is the answer to bitterness? Why it is genuine love and selflessness, you cannot have genuine love and bitterness at the same time can you? No it says the antidote for bitterness is a genuine love for one's companion.

[Proverbs 29:15](#) says that a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. That doesn't sound like the best of relationships does it? But discipline changes that whole picture, a discipline can bring rest instead of shame.

[Proverbs 19:18](#) says chasten thy son while there is hope, and I think it finishes like this: And let not thy soul spare for his crying. In other words that discipline is going to be severe enough that it gets the job done so that there can be a relationship built. What's it like to have a relationship, what kind of a relationship do you have with the rebel? Not very close is it? If you are going to have a good relationship there has to be submission and workability and obedience and pliability.

In [Ephesians 6:4](#) it says and you fathers bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Where is the father going to get his direction and steering? Why from the Book of books, from the One from whom real wisdom comes from. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ([Prov.9:2](#)).

And then in second Timothy chapter 1 we have Paul talking about Timothy's faith and he says: I am persuaded that what I see in you, this unfeigned faith, was in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I

am persuaded that in thee also. (2 Tim. 1:5). Now that home apparently was a mixed home because Timothy's father was a Greek, his father isn't mentioned, his character isn't spoken of, but his grandmother's and his mother's is and there was a oneness of faith and a cooperation together. Don't you think as Timothy matured, don't you think that he came to the conclusion that just about everything I am, I owe to God and my mother and grandmother, probably so.

Exodus chapter 2 has a young lady out on the bank of the river probably somewhat anxiously waiting and when Pharaoh's daughter took this little ark of bulrushes and opened it and there was little Moses no doubt crying what did Miriam say? Shall I go and find a nurse for this child for you? (Ex.2:5-7). It spoke of a oneness in the home didn't it, the cooperation, do everything you can.

Well we could keep on looking at references of this nature but we are going to look now at some principles that pertain to couples. Every home starts out as a couple. Some principles that pertain to couples that built strong home relationships and we would desire this for every home, not only ours but those around us as well.

Relationships are built on commitment and first of all a commitment to truth and principle and then a commitment to each other and to all family members. To emphasise relationships at the expense of commitment to principles usually ends in neither being realised. The principle was dropped the relationships are destroyed. I believe that commitment and relationships rise and fall together and so are commitment to truth is at the base of any good relationship.

Some people are so afraid at not having a good relationship that they never initiate the steps that will make for a good relationship and that they never initiate them because it requires discipline and hard work and diligence and they are a bit afraid of discipline because somehow they have the concept that discipline destroys relationships but good discipline enhances a relationship. How can you have a good relationship with each other, even as a couple, if you are undisciplined as individuals and you can't order your life after a certain preset pattern?

To some a good relationship means no conflict. And that is true for all of us to some degree is it not? but there will be some conflict won't there? But the conflicts are worked through and they are resolved and they cease to be a conflict and there is oneness and unity again. I don't think we were married more than three weeks until someone in a business place asked me how it was going and his friend beside him elbowed him sharply in the ribs and said, called him a pretty low name, and said you don't expect him to know yet do you?

Well I just told them that you know it is true that we didn't have any bumps yet that we had to work through, knowing that we have a human nature and we as a couple will run into some things. Now I said notwithstanding we are both Christians, we were both raised in the Mennonite church and we both believe that marriage is permanent it is not a hit or miss thing and we know that some challenges will come up but we are committed to working them through because this is not an experiment. And then the first one of these two sets of the other you know I believe they have more going for them than we did, their background, the oneness.

Of course there is going to be some potential conflicts, of course there's going to be some disagreement but don't throw up your hands in despair, work through them and learn from the principles of God's word and learn to blend and you can have good home relationships. Some feel that the only way to have good relationships is to cater to the other as a means to avoid addressing any differences. Or they think a good relationship is a super evening without any family responsibilities. Well there is better relationships than that isn't there? That is built on something rather shallow.

Or avoiding the discipline of reining in the flesh or of course setting or requiring obedience in children, it is too conflict oriented they say, that if we applied biblical principles to those potential conflicts we can absolve them and go on. In reality any relationship that is built by avoiding hard choices any of those relationships become really empty in the end.

Now we are looking at some challenges to couples to learn to blend, to pull together, to make things work to realise the best in marriage experience.

What does it take to have a good relationship?

Number one it takes agreements in faith and in life's purpose to serve the Lord. A oneness of goal. [Philippians 1:21](#) it is not speaking specifically of marriage but it is a principle that holds true for Christian experience and here it says: For me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

When each has that as their life goal they are on a premise to work and to agree together. If you go on to verse 27 it says: Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. ([Philip. 1:27](#)).

Now that is just as important in a couples experience in home life as it is in church life, striving together for the faith of the gospel. That you be like-minded one toward each other being of one accord and one mind ([Philip.2:2](#)).

Someone asked recently what the basic difference is between your faith and faith in general, what would you say? Christendom in general and your faith. Well I think the basic difference is between theory and practice, you know we can theorize about something or we can put it into practice.

A bulldozer operator, as I was fuelling his machine years ago, asked: Just how Conservative are you?

I said: Well we endeavour to take the New Testament at face value and apply it to our life in everyday our affairs.

He paused a little and said: Then you are rather Conservative, rather Conservative.

A commitment to truth means to do God's will and as soon as any Christian, we don't always know what God's will is, sometimes there is a period of uncertainty in that discovery process but the most important issue is settled in our life, to do God's will is the frame on which we operate.

The second principle I would like to point out is mutual respect for each other and their backgrounds. You know if humility is cultivated than respect for one's relatives should not be so difficult. We can always learn something from another even if we see some negatives that came out of their home or walk, we can learn something from another. Grandpa often said it is a poor soul who can't learn something from another person, even something to avoid.

Have you ever witnessed a home or someone with enough intensity to realise that you are going to redouble your effort so that you don't become like that individual, you learn something from them even though it wasn't positive and you applied it to your own experience.

In the third place a third principle is that of patience and tolerance for each other in times of weakness in particular, that we learn how to support. You know at a weak moment sometimes we say something or do something that we are sorry for, do we major on the weakness? I had to think about Elkanah, his wife Hannah was barren and it was a reproach and he said how can it be, I am doing my best for you. He wanted to make life as easy as he could in the struggle of her motherly heart that desired a child. No he didn't fully understand he said: Am I not better to thee than ten sons? Well he couldn't fully make up for that yearning could he, he could do his best but he couldn't fully understand possibly that sister's heart but he was trying to be everything that he could to make life as pleasant as possible. (1 Samuel 1:1-8).

The Bible says that husbands are to dwell with their wives according to knowledge (1 Peter 3:7) according to the understanding of their weakness and each of us have weaknesses. In the frustration of the barrenness what did Rachel say to Jacob? She said give me children or I die. And it says Jacob was angry with her and he said: "Am I God?" (Gen.30:1-2) Who do you think I am? Well wouldn't it have been better for their relationship if he had stopped and paused a moment and trying to understand the yearning of her motherly heart, wouldn't it? And it would have avoided the clash and made it glad instead. The Bible says that we are to have compassion one of another be pitiful and courteous. (1 Peter 3:8).

The fourth principle I would like to point out for couples is to refuse to hold ourselves up to others that would say we are vain but there is a streak of pride that needs to be crucified no doubt in each of us and when that pride is injured it is hurt. And those little things can be nursed and those small things can be turned into mountains, they can be. But as we will relate to them as they are small and work through them then we can benefit. How many wrecked homes, when you ask about how this all started, have trouble pointing you to that thing and often they say that it started with this or that small thing unresolved, a small thing unresolved and had multiplied

and it fed on each other until after a bit it was bigger than what you could contain.

I know one thing I had to swallow as a young father and dad was that when I was really tired I'd like to sit on a chair and prop up my feet and just simply relax and do nothing for a while. Now the man likes to be thought of as strong and masculine and tough, that is kind of our image isn't it? But here my young wife would just go on working with her hands she always was doing something and in my frustration I said: Don't you ever, ever sit down and do just nothing just nothing?

It was a little seeing that it made me feel smaller, we need to work through those things instead of allowing them to build up into to a place of frustration where we start majoring on the negative of the other party, actually it was a positive instead of a negative when you looked at it right, to be active and apply yourself to something productive as the day goes by.

Another principle that helps to build strong relationships is contentment. Contentment with the everyday things of life. You know the person that is looking for the thrill to add satisfaction is on a lifelong search and they basically come up empty again and again. But when you learn to be satisfied with the everyday good and the commitment to each other money doesn't matter as much, you know the love of money and luxuries has destroyed many a home. I think it was brother Merle Ruth who said that when you study homes of the world that three things that wrecked most homes are: poor cooking, sloppy housekeeping and overdrawn accounts, and that's where it starts the frustration over money and contentment. You know if we would learn contentment and the value of that then it would help immensely. Money can buy a lot of things but it cannot buy a solid good relationship it can't. Let's go on.

In the sixth place one of those principles for good solid strong relationships is absolute honesty with each other, there is nothing hidden. That doesn't mean you actively sought out everything that you did that was disrespectful in your lifetime and spilled it all out but you don't knowingly hide anything from your companion what the other needs knowing in order to work through to go on together. We need good, clear, frank, gentle communication, it is so vital for good relationships. How many tense moments could have been avoided if we had clearly communicated last week

or last month or last year but lack of communication builds uncertainty and we are not quite sure where the other is.

Number seven is loyalty. There are things in home lives that are private and we do not expose each other. Right now we are memorising the love chapter (1 Cor.13) probably you are too at church and it says it does not rejoice in iniquity, it does not major on weaknesses, it doesn't flaunt peoples past problems before them but it rejoices in the truth. There is a certain loyalty to each other that is very necessary it means that we are together in this we don't exploit each other.

One father began telling a story that very much embarrassed his wife and she muttered something a time or two and finally the little daughter said: "Don't please, don't daddy, mother doesn't like you to tell that." But he kept right on any how and his wife's face turned cherry red. Just a little glimpse into how they got along, do you think it enhanced relationships? Certainly not. There was a breach of loyalty as a couple that I am sure did damage very much.

In the eighth place pray about everything. We mentioned the scriptures that said for this child I prayed, but we also ought to be able to say for my wife I prayed, (the husband) and the wife for my husband I prayed, or for my child or business. And not only do we pray for our companion that it would help them be their best but we ask for grace that we know how to relate to weaknesses and things that aren't quite ideal and if we apply enough attention to ourselves and ask the Lord for grace how to relate to the challenges we will discover an immense aid by the support we get from our heavenly Father, it is helping us to make an average situation better or maybe a poor situation more tolerable.

While we are looking at building strong home relationships on the part of couples but most couples have children. How can we build strong relationships with our children? That seems to me more of a lack in our society then even as couples. We are going to look at some principles now that involve other family members.

First of all a good relationship with our children begins with feeling wanted and needed. Every child deserves to be needed and wanted in their homes. And they feel wanted and needed as gratitude is expressed for their

contributions something like: I enjoy the evening together with you children, that is a treasured little note when coming from our parents. Children very early sense that they belong in this home and that they are cared for and here is where they are loved, they belong they are wanted. My heart sinks sometimes when I hear parents of adopted children talking about the great difference between biological and adopted children. There are some challenges we know that, some particular challenges, but that child likes to feel as accepted wherever they are, adopted or your own biologically, there may be some real challenges. One father told me that their child was very self-conscious about their difference of appearance and that was eased eventually by other parents letting them know that they cared for them and it didn't matter one bit to them, not a bit.

The second place we need to have a clear agenda a plan for raising children. Children do not thrive on surprises, too many surprises yield anxiety and a good relationship grows out of security instead. And when I say surprises I am not saying we are talking about a pleasant surprise you plan for them, I am talking about the fact that they get to the age of say 10 years old and suddenly they discover here is a new rule that is pretty major and I never heard any inklings of it at all before, or they reach 18 and they expected this or that because that is how we treated the older brother and sister and suddenly it is changed in mid stream, no warning. Children do not like those kind of surprises.

Communication. When should a young man develop his standards for courtship, just six weeks before he starts dating? Of course not. That is a matter of conversation and training and interaction between them and their parents some time before that. So have a clear agenda, have a set of guidelines that your home is operated upon and then stick to those.

The third principle I would like to point out is that we need to know where our children are. Now by that I am not saying physical location but I'm saying that we need to know how they think and what their attitude toward authority and work and different home things are. What are they like, are they trouble, are they boastful, are they frightened, do they tend towards selfishness or are they timid or bold? We cannot have a good relationship and communicate well unless we discern where they are and then we relate to them on the level where they are. That is important.

You know we need to listen to our children, have time for them. Some 6 to 8-year-olds were writing little stories about grandma and the mostly recurring themes that came out of these youngsters stories was that in essence was that grandma had time for us, she took time, and these children stated things that impressed them about grandma, I can tell the same story to grandma and she never says I've heard that one before or she says: Thank you, even for my bouquet of dandelions and just a number of things. Time spent, they were impressed with grandma because grandma had time. Well if we are going to have a good relationship with our children we are going to have to have the grandma spirit before we are grandmas don't we and take time for them so that they do not feel excluded and kind of pushed out.

I think it was John R Martin that said one daughter came while he was reading in the easy chair and started telling him something and she said: "Are you listening?" "Yes, go ahead." And she started and then she stopped and she said: "Poppa are you listening?" He said: "Yes go ahead." But he didn't look up from what he was reading and she stopped a third time and said: "I want you to listen with your eyes." She didn't have the assurance that he was really paying attention to her yet you see.

And if we are going to have a good solid relationship with our children we need to pay enough attention to them so that they know that they have our attention and that we are not listening with just a little bit of one ear but we are ready to enter into their experience with them. Take time with them, enter into their experience. Don't ask them their opinion on something unless you plan to take time to listen to it and at least in some small way factor it into your decision-making process.

In the fourth place teaching them respect. Respect and relationships rise and fall together, they always do, but so do respect and discipline. An undisciplined child ends up having a poor relationship in the home with their parents. Where did the child Samuel learn to respect Eli? When he thought he heard Eli calling in the night and he went to Eli's side where did he learn that respect and promptness? (1 Sam.3:5-8) Why he learned it at home, he was used to obeying promptly to the commands that were given, he thought he heard a command from Eli and he was there, he was responsive,

he was taught obedience. And that obedience, that discipline taught not just respect for his parents but for the authority in general and he was then prepared to respect Eli.

When our children learn to respect us it is much easier to respect the schoolteacher, the principal or the pastor or the local government law enforcement officer.

Too often parents think firmness spoils relationships but really the opposite is true, if there is not firm discipline, firm loving discipline, good relationship is practically impossible.

Some time ago I saw a little study in Christian Family Living, you may have read this, this study was made by several college students that study the effectiveness of parental training in a number of homes and then they followed through those children right on through their teenage years early 20s and they rated each of these homes as to how well adjusted these children were socially, what kind of relationship did they have with their parents and with society in general and in the second place how good did they imbibe the principles or the goals of their parents? Were they adjusted socially, did they have good relationships and did they followed in the convictions of their parents? That is what they were rating them for.

They divided all these homes into four categories: authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful and permissive.

Now the neglectful and permissive would definitely have a minus after them but what about the authoritative and the authoritarian?

By authoritative we mean someone who proceeds from the understanding that he has authority and he exercises that authority but he does not abuse that authority.

The authoritarian is one who majors on the authority and his role is upheld and demonstrated and you get the idea that one of the basic reasons that I discipline is to maintain myself as boss instead of for the good of the individual. Both the authoritative and be authoritarians spank their children, they did discipline.

The authoritative was careful to teach well and to discipline with that child's good and from a framework of love we rest of the authoritarian dis-

cipline and rather hastily and forcefully and a bit on the rough side on occasion.

Just some time ago I saw a parent whose child was not quite doing what they thought it should after church and this dad grabbed this child by the shoulder of the shirt and marched it around the back of the church faster than what that child could actually keep up so it was I kind of bit my cheek a little and I wondered, authoritative or authoritarian? Which is it going to be?

There when this study was all over which group rated the best in achieving these two goals? Why it was the authoritative one. Which group rated the worst? It was the authoritarian one.

You may be would have thought it would be the neglectful or the permissive but somehow the relationship was spoilt through selfishness through that hard driving uncaring black of keeping discipline and love for the child's future all blended together.

And so if we want to build solid relationships with our children then let's discipline carefully, let's teach thoroughly, let's make sure that the object of our discipline is to train for the Lord and not to just simply come out on top. You know one of the real challenges for young parents is how they relate to their children may be a bit differently when others are watching then when they do when they are by themselves and it is good for us to think that thing through because if we are more strict in public we are preserving self image that's all and our children are quick to pick up on that and so let's be just as strict in private as we are in public. And sometimes there are some things you may let go one time and address it in private later, that may even be the case, but let's be careful how we discipline but remember that discipline and relationships rise and fall together.

You cannot have a relationship may I repeat, with a rebel, there is always a minus after that, there has to be compliance and goodwill and a willingness to be taught.

In the fifth place parents need to guide to their homes based upon firm convictions, upon their own firm convictions. Now that does not mean that our convictions are not modified and tempered by the voice of the body by

instruction and teaching in God's house, they are modified by that. But you cannot build strong home relationships on somebody else's convictions and directions.

I discovered to my dismay some years ago that a certain father was calling repeatedly and asking for advice as to how to relate to his children. Only to my dismay I discovered that this father was saying, Brother so-and-so said it must be this way. What kind of a relationship do you think that father had with his son or daughter? It was spoilt, it was poor very poor.

You must discipline and order your home because you believe you are on the right track and you have a firm foundation for what you are doing and you do it in your own right as a parent.

Ye fathers and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. [\(Eph.5:4\)](#) You have the right and the responsibility to give that direction because it is right to give and to discipline because there is something that needs correcting.

Well I see our time is up. We need to do things together and include our children in the family program, make them feel like they are an asset to the group and you do not have to lavish a lot of things on them to do it, it is the every day, at the every day things and the inclusion in them that helps to build that relationship.

Well may the Lord bless us as we endeavour to guide our homes and to grow in our relationships and to have that kind of love and goodwill and cooperation in our homes that the Lord intends.

Shall we kneel for prayer.