

1. **Autocratic Rule versus Democratic Rule in a Family**

The autocratic home must be properly organized (**I Cor. 11:3**) -- God  
Christ  
Man  
Woman (**Eph. 5:22-24**)  
Children (**Eph. 6:1-2**)

**I Cor. 14:33-34** “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” Parents are blessed when they bring up their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (**Eph. 6:4**). “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (**Prov. 22:6**). “Train” – the original Hebrew word is “*chanak*” which means to initiate, discipline or dedicate. “Way” – the original Hebrew word is “*derek*” means a course of life or mode or action. The original intent of the passage: “Discipline a child for his course of life and the actions he should take”.

2. **God-given Privilege**

“Man” is the head of the home. He is commanded by God to assume the leadership position of his household. If he refuses God will hold him accountable (Eph. 5:23-24; Gen. 3:16). The father is instructed:

- To bear the ultimate responsibility in ensuring discipline and instruction (Eph. 6:4)
- To be the protector—An autocratic home must be blessed with the watchful protection of a father (Eph. 5:27-29)
- To be the physical provider (Gen. 3:17-19, 23; I Tim. 5:8)
- To be the spiritual leader (I Cor. 11:3, II Tim. 1:5)

“Woman” is to be a help-meet (Gen. 2:18). The mother has immediate responsibility under the father:

- To be in submission (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:12; Tit. 2:5; I Pet. 3:1-5)
- To be a keeper at home—meaning to guide and keep watch for the welfare of the family members (I Tim. 5:14)
- To be the guide of the house—Capable of managing, directing and organizing; making certain that family goods are properly conserved and utilized (Prov. 31:10-31).

When a woman is married to an unbeliever the family relationship and structure does not change. The familial relationship that Paul speaks of in Ephesians chapters 5 and 6 do not apply only to Christians. The wife/mother takes on the responsibility of ensuring the children are instructed if the father is not willing to take on this responsibility (**II Tim. 1:5**).

“Children”-- Children should be given responsibilities in the home. Responsibilities will be given based upon age, experience, talents and abilities. At very young ages our children learn and follow instruction—never underestimate the ability of our children to follow instructions both physically and spiritually. Children grow based upon the teaching and the opportunities that we give them. (**Luke 2:41-52; Col. 3:20**)

When God is the head of the home and we honor each other as husband and wife, the rest of the priority list will play out. Each member has a different job, but all are equally loved. You will be able to work together and train your children, reach out to others as a family, and God will take care of each of you.

### 3. Parents as Models

Consider: Children cannot see God, so their image of what He is like is developed by observing their parents. The first responsibility of parents is to “model” the role of a devoted servant of God for their children. If the “model” is faulty the message will be garbled and confused. Wise parents study each child, learn their individual characteristics and meet specific needs with an individual plan for growth in Christ (**Eph. 6:4**). The highest priority for Christian families is the time they spend together. Nothing is more effective in edging out evil influences.

### 4. Character-Centered Parents

Character-centered parents: Ask yourself, “**who** do I want my child to become?” Character-centered parents who want their children to be the best are concerned about helping their children live up to their purpose—children who respect God, others and themselves. Stated in another way, they will live up to their God-given potential. “**Who**” your children become should be more important than what they do. Jesus is the greatest example of someone who lived with a purpose, who reached His potential--In the Garden of Gethsemane when He said “not my will, but thine, be done” (**Matt. 26:39**) and when He went to the cross to save us from eternal separation from God (**Matt. 27:33-35**).

Character-centered parents make decisions with the end in mind—to raise their children to become respectful adults who reach their God-given potential. They encourage their children to correct their mistakes and rectify their wrongs and to keep striving to reach their full potential and persevere in the face of setbacks. Focus on building your child’s character (**Eph. 6:1-3; Prov 23:22-26**).

Character-centered parents look to God’s principles for their instruction on how to parent (**Prov. 6:20-23**).

Character-centered parents keep their promises. Let your “yes be yes” and your “no be no”. When your children respect you they will more easily respect God and in the process respect others and themselves. Over the last several decades, our society has emphasized self-esteem rather than self-respect in our children. Due to this human philosophy, we now see more disrespectful than respectful children.

Character-centered parents put God first, then their marriage, children, others and finally themselves.

Our responsibility as a parent is to help our children become their best “selves”, so they can fulfill their God-given purpose. God created each of our children with talents, abilities and a unique personality to form a one-of-a-kind human being who can make a difference in this world.

Questions for thought

1. How does God want the family to be organized?
2. What is the woman’s role in the family? Does that change when her husband is not a believer?
3. Why is it important for parent’s to consider what examples they set for their children?
4. How can we teach our children to be unselfish and put others first?