

## *An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)*

### **I Am The Head Of The Family**

#### **Scenario:**

A young couple in the congregation gets married. They are both, as far as anyone can tell, faithful to our Lord. Everything seems to be going well in their first year of marriage. Then, a problem gets brought to light that the husband has with his father-in-law. His wife's father is always interfering in the affairs of this young couple. It has become a source of tension between this young man and his wife. His father-in-law lives about four hundred miles away and professes to be a faithful Christian. As tensions in this young couple's marriage become noticeable to faithful brethren surrounding them, an older woman in the congregation counsels the young lady to stop allowing her father to interfere in the marriage. That prompts the father-in-law to come see his daughter and to confront the older sister in Christ that gave his daughter counsel. That confrontation occurs in the back of the room where the saints assemble on the first day of the week. You see and hear it.

#### **Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:**

The father-in-law says this to a sister in this congregation: "I am the head of the family. I will always be my daughter's father and she will always obey my voice in all things as Colossians 3:20 states." The argument continues with this man being very forceful and loud.

#### **A Later Statement Is Made:**

As several try to reason with this man and the young couple, the situation continues to escalate. The young man says this to his wife and her father: "If you want your daughter to obey you over me, then you take her home with you and you both can just go to Hell."

#### **For Discussion:** What do you see in those statements?

- When two people get married, that is the formation of a new household (**Genesis 2:18-24**).
- As far as anyone can tell things "seem" to be going well. Yet, we know that things can be different than they appear (**I Timothy 5:24-25**).
- Once married, a woman then is in subjection to her husband (**Genesis 3:16, Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18-19, and I Peter 3:1-6**). \*We have to remember this as we proceed. Anytime we get involved in someone's marriage, you risk violating the pattern of authority our Lord put in place (even with good intentions).
- At the first, without knowing all the details, a father-in-law may be only seeking to protect his daughter. Us fathers can relate. No father wants to see his child in a bad situation. We don't know what is going on. Imagine a scenario wherein a man is abusing his wife. As a father-in-law, or a man at all, you would not stand

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afar and let that happen to a woman without get involved (**Proverbs 24:11-12**). That is one of many issues that could be concerning from afar.

- Tension in a marriage is not a good thing (**Mark 3:24**). In any relationship, such is dangerous (**Proverbs 17:14** and **Proverbs 26:21**). Furthermore, it is hard to focus on being joint heirs together (**I Peter 3:7**) if there are unresolved problems.
- Professing to be a faithful Christian doesn't mean much (**Matthew 23:27-28**).
- It is sad that the problems in the marriage become visible to others. There is a possible role for an older sister to play in this situation (**Titus 2:3-5**). She also has to be careful not to overstep her bounds in that counsel as not to supplant the authority of the husband (young or not). Question - is anyone else trying to help here? Are the men talking to the young man to see what's going on???
- Now think about this, the only way the father-in-law knows this older sister gave advice to this younger woman is if she told her father. Hmm... So, whatever interference is going on, the wife is bringing it to some degree by talking to her father. Young woman ought to be busy as not to speak things which they ought not (cf. **I Timothy 5:13**).
- Whenever we see problems that we can aid in among our brothers and sisters in Christ, we should carefully seek to help (**Galatians 6:1-2** and **I John 3:14-18**).
- The confrontation will have the attention of the faithful members of the congregation. When any person shows up to the assembly to confront members of the local body, the local brethren ought to stand with our own (**Philippians 1:27**). Think about how far we should go for one another (**John 15:12-13**).

### Regarding the Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

- It is easy to see how an unlearned person could think that a father is the head of his children all their lives if that person only reads certain Scriptures out of context (i.e. **Exodus 20:12**, **Matthew 15:4**, **Matthew 19:19**, and **Ephesians 6:1-4**). Remember, as we've already seen, other Scriptures show a difference for a married woman (again; **Genesis 2:18-24**, **Genesis 3:16**, **Ephesians 5:22-33**, **Colossians 3:18-19**, and **I Peter 3:1-6**).
- That person who does not fully study this out is guilty of incorrectly handling the word of God (**II Timothy 2:14-18**) and twisting the Scriptures to their own destruction (**II Peter 3:15-17**). If this father-in-law were an honest Bible student, he would read the context (**Colossians 3:18-4:1**) and see that he has this wrong.
- The father-in-law situation here gives issues that will last longer than this moment and potentially effect much down the road if this is not dealt with. For one example, how could a man ever be an elder if his house was run by his father-in-law (**I Timothy 3:4-5**)?
- As the man continues to be loud and aggressive, cooler heads ought to try and prevail (**Proverbs 15:1-2**).
- The escalation of strife is not good (**Proverbs 15:18**, **Proverbs 17:19**, **Proverbs 20:3**, and **Proverbs 29:22**).
- The anger and strife in this scenario is going to be destructive (**Proverbs 14:17** and **Proverbs 17:14**).

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### Regarding the Later Statement That Is Made From Our Scenario:

- Starting here with thinking from **James 3:16**. This has to be stopped (**Titus 1:10-11**).
- A contentious man needs dealt with swiftly (**Titus 3:9-11**).
- We cannot allow this man in to do harm to the saints and by extension the congregation (**Ecclesiastes 9:18** and **Galatians 5:7-9**).
- Let's remember something here. This is a young couple. The husband is young. Youth has to be dealt with understanding he is not mature (i.e. **II Timothy 2:22**). Young man want to be strong (**Proverbs 20:29**). Young men need to work hard that their youth is not despised (**I Timothy 4:12**). This young man is put in a spot that would be tough for any man to stand in without being furious.
- If we allowed this situation to escalate to this point, we are all wrong. Think of the principle of being watchmen here (**Ezekiel 33:6**).
- Stop this young couple here. Pull them aside. It is wrong for a woman to depart from her husband (**Jeremiah 3:20**, **Malachi 2:14-16**, and **I Corinthians 7:10**).
- It is time for some brother, knowledgeable in the faith, to sit down with this couple and teach them about whatever is going on in their marriage. While not all marriages can be saved, the effort needs made nonetheless (**I Thessalonians 5:11-14**).
- If there is sin involved, privately, in this marriage; **Matthew 18:15-17** needs to be followed.
- This young man is acting in anger. That is not going to bring about the will of the Lord (**James 1:19-20**). DON'T LET THIS CONTINUE is screaming in my mind.
- We still don't know why the father-in-law has butted into their marriage. We do know he is sinfully wrong on his place of authority. What, if anything, is going on that may need addressed. It is time to cautiously find out (**Proverbs 18:13**).
- The young man is right about one thing, his wife were to go with her father they would go to Hell for violating the very Scriptural points we have discussed already (**II Thessalonians 1:8-9**). What the young man has not considered is that he will join them for violating the will of God as well (i.e. **Matthew 19:9** and **James 2:12-13**).