



HOME BASE PART 2

BY GORDON BALS

If restful families create an atmosphere that nourishes the inner life of its members then humble families take that life and give it wings.

The level of humility in any family is a reflection of the humility that exists in the marital relationship. If husband and wife are growing together in a way that softens them, then the whole landscape of the family is different. Marriage helps us grow in humility because the closeness of a marital relationship naturally brings exposure we avoid in other relationships. However, receiving this unique “gift” in marriage is not easy and we must pray for a willingness to let marriage reveal our sinfulness and for strength to endure the discomfort and shame these periods bring. The content of Romans 7 clearly teaches that we do the things we don't want to do. This usually becomes painfully clear in a marriage. We have the opportunity to see our powerlessness over sin as we keep hurting one another without having the ability to stop it apart from God's involvement. We are all beggars when it comes to real inner change. The best thing we can do is to live in the awkwardness of exposure, while hungering and thirsting for more righteousness, and waiting for mercy.

Living this way actually helps sin lose its grip on us. The more we hide our sin and keep it covered up the more it controls us. One of the quickest ways to inner change is to let our spouse reveal to us the ways we sin that we can't see. The rub in doing this is that after we have been married for a while we usually feel like a victim when it comes to our sin and our spouse. We tend to believe that we sin because of our spouses' tendencies. For example, we say things like, “If you were just neater I wouldn't get angry!” or “I can't slow down because you are so lazy!” However, when we are married, the very best person to help us see our sin is the person we think is responsible for it. As hard as it may be to admit, our spouse probably sees areas of fleshliness in us more clearly than we see them ourselves. When we let these areas be uncovered we are actually “saying” that repentance and freedom from sin is more important than self-protection.

The softening that comes from that kind of relating primarily benefits the children because in their weakness they are more impacted by our fleshly tendencies. Marriage is supposed to grow in us the meekness our children need. The way in which we sharpen one another as husband or wife can grow in us a humility that the children taste as a result. It does not matter how much we teach our children about the Lord or how much we take them to church, if we ignore this one crucial truth: what matters most is what our children taste from us and what they taste from us grows out of the marital relationship. (Single parents walking through the loss of a spouse, whether through death or divorce, offer the same opportunity for humility as the ongoing exposure of a good marriage).

Making room in your marriage for exposure and subsequent change graces your children in three ways. They feel more invited to be in your presence and enjoy lingering there. Something about humility is compelling. It is alluring for children to feel the safety to be who they are, good and bad, and somehow know instinctively it will be honored. Evil shames depravity and makes people hide it. Godly humility invites it out into the open and acts as a salve to facilitate the redemptive process. To the degree that you grow the ability to endure exposure in your marriage you will create an atmosphere where you children will be enticed to be more authentic and find the grace they need to grow into godliness.

Next, if we grow the faith to endure exposure and wait for Jesus to change us then we will experience redemption in our marriage that will give us a deeper rest in the power of the Gospel. Where this is salient in child rearing is that your children will bring their flesh to you. Actually, they will shout, sing and dance it at you. What you believe in those moments is crucial. If you lack rest in the Gospel you will try to become the Gospel to your children or you will run away from your children and leave them to deal with their sin on their own. If however, you have a growing confidence in the Gospel because of its work in your marriage, you will have a hopeful anticipation about what the Gospel can do in your child's life and you will not be overwhelmed by their sin. You will then speak (through words and actions) the truth to them in love.

Finally, humility gives you different vision. Human sight always becomes clearer as we are free to judge the log in our own eye (Matt. 7:1-6). Pride, in its multifaceted



dimensions, clouds our ability to see. Unclear vision causes us to judge our children "according to the flesh". Hardness in a marriage keeps sin (and not the Gospel) as the leader in a family which causes us as parents to falsely believe that the biggest thing alive in our children is their flesh. As a result, we miss the unique way God wants to speak through our children in who they are becoming. "For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

As funny as it may sound to you, I would actually call my three girls – the truth teller, the beauty enhancer and the kindness giver. As the years pass on and we grow in humility we are seeing the distinctive way the Spirit of the Lord is yearning to express Himself through our children. Although, each child may do different things with their lives than we expect, whom each is becoming on the inside is far clearer. That clarity helps us as parents to encourage and guide each child in concert with God's design and how He is leading them. Humble families are conduits of grace that breathe life into the children.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Theory & Practice of Helping

Relationships class is full and will start Tuesday, February 3.

Gordon will be doing a **Home Base Seminar** (flyer enclosed) Friday evening April 16 and Saturday morning April 17 at Oak Mtn. Presbyterian Church.

We are excited about helping to promote the **"Battle for Men's Hearts"** retreat being given by Larry Bolden of the Wellspring Group on March 11-14 at Shoco Springs (flyer enclosed).

theNEWS at DAYMARK

We had an excellent year of giving capped off by a December that helped us catch up on all our bills. One of the highlights of the holiday happened when a couple both Julie & Gordon have a deep affection for stopped by the Daymark office on the way through Birmingham to drop off a \$1,200 donation. Gordon had just prayed (a little anxiously) that morning for the year end needs. Surprises like that remind us that God sees and knows all. \$36,600 was given to Daymark in 2003! Thanks for all your prayers and support! We would like to make a change in 2004 that would help us to minister more effectively. All of our past teachings are on tape many of which are of poor quality. When we hand people tapes these days many look at us like we are from another millennium. We would love to have someone improve the quality of our old tapes while dumping them onto master CD's so we can begin making quality CD copies to give out. We have called around to get estimates and it will take \$800 to convert our teachings to CD. If you would like to give to this project you can send a donation and mark on the check that it is for CD conversion.

Through the kindness and hard work of a good friend of Daymark we have now entered the 21st Century.

check out our New Website at
www.DaymarkCounseling.com



about DAYMARK

Daymark Pastoral Counseling is a non-profit organization designed to make counseling and teaching resources accessible to individuals, couples, families, churches and para-church organizations. We are devoted to helping others experience the redemptive power of the Gospel. Gifts or financial contributions made to Daymark are tax deductible. P.O. Box 59768 Homewood, AL 35259 (205) 871-3332 dgbals@juno.com WWW.DaymarkCounseling.com