***Gifts of the Reformation (5)***

***The Christian Family***

Martin Luther’s celebrated marriage to Katherine von Bora helped create a new model for the Christian family. This model came to perhaps its fullest expression in Presbyterian and Puritan expectations for families.

**The Reformation reformed the Christian family –**

**1. By the Elevation of *Marriage***

**A. Rome exalted *singleness over purity***

Hebrews 13:4

*“Not every pastor can live without a woman, not just on account of the weakness of the flesh, but much more on account of keeping his house. If, then, he employs a woman, and the pope will permit him to do this, but will not allow him to have her in marriage, that means nothing else than leaving a man and a woman alone together, and yet forbidding them to yield to temptation. It is like bringing fire and straw together, and trying to forbid blaze or smoke”* (Luther, Dillenberger edition, 450).

**B. Reformers exalted *love in marriage***

Ephesians 5:25-30; Titus 2:3-5

*“Some marriages were motivated by mere lust, but mere lust is felt even by fleas and lice. Love begins when we wish to serve others.”*

*“Of course, the Christian should love his wife. He is supposed to love his neighbor, and since his wife is his nearest neighbor, she should be his deepest love. And she should also be his dearest friend”* (Luther, in *Martin Luther Had a Wife,* 35).

**2. In the Training of *Children***

**A. The *home* as the school of Christ**

Ephesians 6:4

*“Urge magistrates and parents to rule wisely and to educate children, admonishing them, at the same time, that such duties are imposed on them, and showing them how grievously they sin if they neglect them. For in such a case they overthrow and lay waste alike the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, acting as if they were the worst enemies both of God and of men* (Luther, *Preface to Small Catechism*).

*Therefore it is the duty of every father of a family at least once a week to examine his children and servants, and to ascertain what they know of it, or have learned, and, if they be not familiar with it, to keep them faithfully at it* (Luther, *Preface to Large Catechism*).

**B. The *Puritan* pattern for training**

Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 4-7

Pastors “*must have a special eye upon families, to see that they are well ordered, and the duties of each relation ordered.... Go occasionally among them, when they are likely to be most at leisure, and ask the master of the family whether he prays with them, and reads the Scripture, or what he does”* (Richard Baxter, *Reformed Pastor,* 100).

* Godly *example*

*“Precept without Patterns will do little good; you must lead them to Christ by Examples as well as Counsel; you must set yourselves firs, and speak by Lives as well as words; you must live Religion as well as talk Religion”* (Eleazar Mather, *The Puritan Family,* 102).

* Parental *prayers*
* Family *devotions*
* Public *worship*
* Gentle *discipline*

**Conclusion—**The life of John Paton.

**What are you willing to change so that your family can be re-oriented around the reading of Scripture, prayer, spiritual discussion, and church? Are the souls of your children important enough for you to make these sacrifices?**