

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday
 Bible Classes.....9 A.M.
 Worship 10:00 A.M.
 Worship/Bible Study..5 P.M.

Wednesday:
 Bible Study 7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 March 20, 2022

Spiritual Nepotism

by Dan Shipley (slightly edited)

While the term “nepotism” is generally associated with the political realm or business realm, it can certainly be applied in other areas as well. Originally, the term was used to describe the favoritism shown to nephews by medieval prelates. Later, however, nepotism came to be seen as favoritism shown to any relative, and usually in disregard of merit, ethics, or even law itself. In short, it is the practice of giving priority to relatives over right, favoring family to a fault.

It is not difficult, then, to see the term's relevance and application to the spiritual realm. Accordingly, what we might call a sort of “spiritual nepotism” may be described as the practice of favoring family above God. Wasn’t that the sin of Eli the priest? (1 Samuel 2). God saw Eli's indulgence of his wicked sons as a thing of iniquity, “because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not” (1 Samuel 3:13). Sadly, Eli

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honored his sons above God (“honor your sons more than Me”—1 Samuel 2:29). Surely, God is no less concerned when modern “Elis” do the same. Any parent who is more concerned with his child's wants than with God's will makes himself the enemy of God, his child and himself—even if unwittingly. God says children need restraint, discipline, and spiritual training (Deut. 11:19; Prov. 22:6, 13:24, 23:13; Eph. 6:4). To withhold these things in favor of pleasing the child is to honor him above God—it is spiritual nepotism. Whether it's withholding the good or supporting the bad, we do our children immeasurable harm.

Had you ever noticed, for instance, how some schoolteachers have nothing more to do than pick on our children? Don't we just know our dear children wouldn't do all those awful things they've been accused of? Confidence and trust are absolutely essential—except when they blind us to truth and cause us to defend our youth in wrongdoing. Such blind allegiance is a poor substitute for real love and usually hurts more than it helps. Faithfulness requires a consistent application of truth and right to all persons and all circumstances. No doubt Abraham could have easily offered God excuses rather than offer his son Isaac—but thankfully, faith triumphed over feelings in his case, as it must in ours. It is in anticipation of these very conflicts that Jesus says, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37).

This principle also applies to the husband/wife relationship. Think of Christians who have allowed their marriages to di-

voke them from God, who have allowed their union with an unbeliever to separate them from the Lord! It is nothing short of spiritual nepotism when wives put pleasing their husband above pleasing God (and vice versa). Remember the words of Peter and the other apostles, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Family loyalty is much needed, but such loyalty must be shown within the framework of true faith in God.

