



**“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father by him,” Colossians 3:17.**

### **Diligent Service: Home Life**

**Covenant:** We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion, to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

**Aim:** To note that Christian service involves the home life as specifically as it does service in the church

**Text:** I Corinthians 7:3-5; Colossians 3:20-25; Titus 2:1-8

INTRODUCTION — “We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion, to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.” Why is this statement concerning home life suddenly appearing in the Church Covenant? It must be because the home is the basic unit of society!

As goes the home so goes the nation. As goes the home so goes the church. A nation may fall and rise again. A church may be crushed down and rise again. But when the unity of home life is destroyed it brings havoc to both nation and church. Honorable home life will bless our home lives, strengthen our churches, and elevate our nation. There is no danger of a nation's forgetting God so long as the homes are what they should be.

Family worship in the home is a powerful factor. It prevents children from straying from the right way. It keeps unkind words from being spoken. It sanctifies the food eaten. It purifies the conversation carried on. It increases patience. It often leads members of the family to salvation in Christ. It strengthens the witness for Christ in the local community. It blesses the spiritual life of the church.

How church members act in their homes makes a difference in their church. Any congregation composed of people from homes where the Bible

is read, prayer is offered unashamedly, and honest effort is made to win loved ones to Jesus, will be strong and missionary and evangelistic. Is this the kind of home you have? Let God make it so.

The responsibility expressed in the portion of the Church Covenant to be studied today is threefold: personal devotion, religious education, and salvation of our kindred. The Scripture text will be discussed under these three headings.

## EXPOSITION

### I. PERSONAL DEVOTION, I Corinthians 7:3-5.

The tenderest of human relationships are experienced in the home. Here a man and woman join their lives in one. Here children are born, reared, and cherished. Here devotion to the Lord and to one another finds its most perfect expression. So the Scripture says here is where love must be most evidently shown.

1. Devotion is expressed in submission. **“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord,”** Colossians 3:18. This admonition is repeated in Ephesians 5:22 in almost the exact words. The reason for this requirement is, **“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church . . . Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything,”** Ephesians 5:23-24.

Such a hierarchy of authority is not established for convenience. Neither is it an invention of man. **“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God,”** I Corinthians 11:3. This is the way God ordained it. Therefore, the wife is submissive to her husband, not because he deserves it but because God requires it. Submission by the wife is an indication of her devotion to the Lord. Such submission benefits a beautiful spirit and contributes much to the welfare of the home.

Perhaps some woman reads these words with a sense of rebellion. It must be remembered that God never intended the woman to exercise control over the man. This reverses the divine order. It will surely bring trouble. God knew what He was doing when He decreed it thus and He made man and woman to fit into this pattern.

2. Devotion is expressed in authority. **“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them,”** Colossians 3:19. While the woman’s

place is to submit in love, the husband's place is to rule in love. **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies,”** Ephesians 5:25, 28.

The authority which is administered in love will be tender, thoughtful, and fair. The wife with a husband who loves her enough to die for her (and this is the idea presented) will not hesitate to submit herself to him. Such love carries no element of bitterness nor arbitrary authority. It expresses authority in deeds of loving service and tenderness. No sight is more beautiful than a home where husband and wife live in this relationship because of love for one another and devotion to God. This kind of home greatly strengthens a church. Is this the kind of home you have?

3. Devotion is expressed in mutual respect and concern. First Corinthians 7:3-5 deals with the most intimate affairs of marriage. Paul says frankly that conjugal relationships in marriage is right and proper. There is nothing base or wicked in the relationships of husband and wife. In fact, he specifically commands that the duty of cohabitation be faithfully performed by each partner in marriage.

Failure of the married partner to fulfill this relationship will surely bring temptation from Satan. He is always anxious to take advantage of one's natural propensities. Only in periods of deep spiritual exercises should the right of the conjugal relationship be withdrawn. This, however, should be only for brief seasons. Those in positions to do marriage counseling know this is an area of major problems and the cause of many broken homes.

Such interpretation the Scripture clearly denies the teaching that celibacy is a holier state than marriage. The relationships of marriage are ordained of God and is one way to express devotion to Him and to one's married partner. A Christian husband and a Christian wife, whose children are dedicated to God from birth, are in the highest and holiest union possible among humans.

4. Devotion must be expressed in the entire household. It is not enough that the wife or the husband be “religious.” The entire home must be saturated with a spirit of devotion to the Lord. Consider these questions. Do you have a family altar in your home? Are the magazines you read really Christian? What kind of music do you listen to on your radio? What kind of programs do you watch on television and how much time do you spend watching it? How much time is spent in a “quiet time” with the Bible each day? In answering these questions you will answer another yet more important: Is your home really Christian?

## II. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, Colossians 3:20.25.

The home of personal devotion to the Lord and to the members of the family has already gone a long way in the religious education of the children. Children are taught by what parents do as much as by what parents say. Even the best child must be instructed if he grows to true maturity.

1. Children must be taught obedience as a religious duty. **“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord,”** verse 20. Why should children obey their parents? Because the Lord wishes them to do so! For children to go untrained and undisciplined is sure to bring sorrow into the home and calamity upon their lives. A great factor in juvenile problems is the lack of respect for authority which is encouraged by lack of discipline in many homes. Foreign visitors to our country remark about the lack of control exercised upon American children by their parents. It was God who said, **“Honour thy father and thy mother,”** Exodus 20:12. It was God's Holy Spirit who inspired the writing, **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right,”** Ephesians 6:1. It will be to God that one must answer for disobeying these commands. Respect for and obedience to parents is a religious duty. Children must be taught that.

2. Children must be taught to pursue right goals. The parent has a responsibility in the guidance of the child. **“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged,”** verse 21. This verse does not say, “Never do a thing which may disappoint your child.” That is what pseudo-child psychologists say. The Bible rather says, “Do not break the child's spirit” A broken spirit is fatal to youth. Many a young man has turned to a useless or criminal life because of overbearing harshness of parents. The Bible warns against the perpetual faultfinding and hardness which irritates the child and causes him to lose heart.

On the contrary, let the parent encourage mutual respect between members of the family and reverence for God's will. The faults of the children will be dealt with firmly but with loving firmness. An environment will be created in the home in which spiritual values will enter into both discipline and rewards. When Christ is the true head of the home, this will be the result. How children act in relation to the church often indicates how much of a place religion has in daily living.

3. Children must be taught that all life is to be lived “as unto the Lord,” verses 22-25. Paul now uses admonition to household servants to show what real service means. His advice is something like this. “Serve faithfully in whatever task is assigned you. Don't work simply with the intention of gaining a reward but as an evidence of your devotion to the Lord. Whatever

you do, put your whole heart and soul into it, as if you were doing it unto the Lord, not merely for men. After all, your real Master is Christ and He will give you your real reward, a heavenly one. Dishonesty will always be repaid and goodness always rewarded.” That sounds like good advice for young and old alike, doesn't it?

Youth need to learn early that we are responsible to God. Even when one is working for another man, he is responsible to God for the quality of his work. If an employee can get by his employer with something unworthy, he cannot get by God. Faithful performance of one's duty is a good way in which to glorify God. For one to say, “I am a Christian,” should be enough for others to trust him implicitly. Our children should be taught so to live that this will be true for them.

### III. SALVATION OF RELATIVES, Titus 2:1-8.

The Christian is to be concerned about the salvation of every man. To this end he should devote time in prayer, witnessing, Bible study, and should give his offerings to help support the church. It is natural, however, that we should be concerned about our own relatives. There is a physical bond there as well as the spiritual. In joining a Baptist church one commits himself to “seek the salvation of kindred and acquaintances.” Paul makes three pertinent suggestions on this point.

1. We can win our relatives by holding sound doctrine, verse 1. There are many false teachers gone out into the world, I John 4:1. In contrast to these, the believer must stand without apology by the truth of the Gospel. There comes a time when silence would be sin. Sound doctrine will promote repentance, faith and salvation in many who hear. There is no more blessed work than this.

Suppose a Christian girl marries a young man who believes not the truth. How can she best win her husband to Jesus? Well, definitely not by joining in agreement with his unbelief. Let her live in saintly righteousness as an obedient wife. Thus by her own “chaste conversation” the husband will see the reality of Christian conversion.

One young woman was joined in marriage to a young man whose beliefs were actually heretical. She decided the best way to win him to Jesus was to “understand” and so joined with the group of which he was a member. How could she ever win her husband by joining in his error? **“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.”** Even in your home, hold on to Bible truth.

2. We can win our relatives by proper Christian conduct, verses 2-6.

There is no one excused from living like a Christian. Few things are so impressive to the sinner as “the unspoken sermon” of true dedicated living. Paul says older men, aged women, young women, and young men should all live the gospel daily.

(1) Older men are to be marked by sobriety and doctrinal purity, verse 2. They are to abstain from wine, be august, venerable, worthy of respect, and curb their desires and impulses. Their faith is to be in good health with their love and patience. In this way they will be an example to youth.

(2) Aged women are to be holy in example and teaching, verse 3. Their dress, speech, habits, and instruction are to reflect this spirit. Speech is to be marked by the absence of slanderous conversation. They are to spend their time giving instruction and help to the less mature to develop them in Christian character. There is no tangible value worthy to be placed upon saintly mothers or grandmothers who have lived many years with the Lord. They can be a tremendous influence for righteousness in the home.

(3) Young women are to be pure and loyal to their homes, verses 4-5. Phillips translates these verses in these words: “They (the older women) should be examples of the good life, so that the younger women may learn to love their husbands and their children, to be sensible and chaste, home lovers, kindhearted and “willing to adapt themselves to their husbands—a good advertisement for the Christian faith,” With their main interest centered in husband, children and home, kindness and goodness will mark the lives of the young women. There will be no occasion for the accuser to speak reproachfully of the word of God which they profess.

(4) Young men are to be models of self-control, verse 8. To be “sober minded” is “to exercise self control, to think soberly of one's self, to curb one's passions.” This agrees with Paul's admonition to Timothy, **“Flee also youthful lust; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart,”** II Timothy 2:22. There is something wonderfully refreshing about a young man who loves the Lord sincerely and dedicates himself to serve God. Such a man can be a great influence for righteousness in any community.

3. We can win our relatives by the right personal example, verses 7-8. The teacher must apply truths to himself. The preacher is to obey the same principles which he preaches to others. So Titus is called to holiness of conduct that he may be an example to others.

An example is never high-handed, demanding, or domineering. Instead, he is a pattern for the rest of the flock, Matthew 5:16. His life must be uncorrupt and free from low motive. His manner of speech must be beyond condemnation. So pure must be his manner of life that even the person

desiring to find fault would have no occasion to use.

Suppose each church member lived in this manner before his family. What difference would it make in homes and lives? How many parents could win their children to the Lord if they were just the right example? How many husbands and wives could win their marriage partner to the Lord if they were just the right example? Many people have been won through the consistent Christian testimony of a member of the family. Is there someone in your home whom you should win? Occasionally some church member will approach the pastor or evangelist and request them to speak to their loved ones about Jesus. This writer usually assures the petitioner of his willingness to do so, but asks, "Have you spoken to him about the Lord?" It is surprising how many say, "No." If you have a relative who needs Jesus, seek to win him yourself. Then if you need help it will be available.

**CONCLUSION** — This lesson has considered the importance of the Christian's life in his home and its contacts. The Baptist church member has agreed to, "maintain family and secret devotions, to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances." Have you lived up to this solemn commitment? If your church is weak in any of these areas of service, help strengthen her by becoming a worthy standard yourself. Be altogether Christian, for Jesus' sake.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why is Christian home life so important?
2. What is the wife's relationship to her husband?
3. How does the husband exercise authority in the home?
4. Why is obedience of children to parents so important?
5. How can parents religiously educate their children?
6. Why seek to win relatives to Jesus?
7. How can a Christian wife win her unbelieving husband?
8. What place does personal example have in witnessing to others?
9. Why should each home have a daily family worship period?
10. How does this lesson relate to next week's study?