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*“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**

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION—As goes the home so goes the nation! As goes the home so goes the church! These statements are equally true. The home is the basic unit of society. A nation may fall and rise again. A church may be crushed down and rise again. However, when the unity of home life is destroyed both the church and nation suffers.

This is one reason why “we also engage to maintain family and secret devotion, to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.” In so doing we may bless our homes, strengthen our churches, and elevate our nation. The Psalmist has warned, *“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,”* Psalm 9:17. There is no danger of a nation forgetting God so long as its homes are what they should be.

Proper home life has a powerful influence upon children. Many have told of being kept from sin because of the example in their home. Others tell of being won to the Lord as Saviour through the influence of Bible reading and prayer in the home. This practice of giving God recognition is a great stabilizing factor. It prevents much misunderstanding and loss of patience. It causes many unkind words to remain unsaid, preventing distraught nerves and often heads off divorce. What a change would come into the churches of

our North American Baptist Association if every person who reads these words would begin family worship. Take an examination of your own life. Is your home all you want it to be? If not, take God into it more fully. He can make it right!

## EXPOSITION

### 1. Devotion in the Home.

1. Husband and wife should be devoted to one another, I Corinthians 7:3-5. The duty of cohabitation is shared mutually between husband and wife. God has made marriage to be such that “they twain shall be one flesh,” Matthew 19:5. Each complements the other so that neither without the other realizes the perfect ideal of man. There is nothing base and wicked about true human love between husband and wife. This is high and holy relationship which is ordained of God. Indeed, neither husband nor wife are to reject the other. To do so is to invite trouble for Satan is always anxious to take advantage of one's natural propensities. Only in periods of prayer and deep spiritual exercises is it right for the conjugal duty to be neglected. This will be for only a brief season, however. The idea that celibacy is a holier state than the married state is entirely unscriptural. A husband and wife who love one another faithfully and serve one another devoutly is the highest and holiest union possible among human beings. Woe to the home where either neglects the other!

2. The faithful wife is to be in submission to the husband, Colossians 3:18. This admonition is repeated in Ephesians 5:22. There it is used to picture the submission of the church to Christ. Thus the husband stands in relation to the wife as Christ stands to the church. The wife submits herself to her own husband because God has ordained that man is the head of the wife, Ephesians 5:23-24. “It is fit in the Lord” for the wife to be thus submissive because it is ordained of God and is under His eyes. The disciple of the Lord ought to obey. Perhaps some woman reads these words that refuses to obey this injunction. Remember that to refuse is to disobey the Lord God never intended woman to have a husband over whom she exercised control. This reverses the divine order. Trouble will surely result from it. See the divine order set out in I Corinthians 11:3. To reverse any part of it is disobedience.

3. The loving husband is to rule his own home, Colossians 3:19. The wife with a loving husband will not fear to submit herself to him. Because he loves, his rule will be in all tender thoughtfulness and care. As the wife is

commanded to submit, so the husband is commanded to love. This is a peculiar love which the husband exercises—like the love of Christ for the church. It is a self-sacrificing love which delights to serve. It carries no mark of bitterness or arbitrary authority. It uses deeds of service to express its depth and tenderness. Nothing is stranger nor more beautiful than a family guided in the nurture and admonition of the Lord by a husband and father who loves each member sincerely.

4. All members are to be subject to the rule of Christ. The wife must submit to the husband and the husband must rule the home in love, because each member is under the rule of Christ. Observe the use of expressions like “in the Lord” and “unto the Lord” occurring in this passage. It speaks of the holy nature of family relationships and of the divinely given responsibility of having a Christian home. When God's children stand before Him in judgment they will answer for their home life as surely as for any other deed. How will it fare with you?

## **II. Religious Education in the Home.**

In the church Covenant, Baptist members agree to keep a Christian atmosphere in the home. Colossians 3:20-25 gives suggestions as to how this can be done.

1. Children are to learn obedience, 8:20. The divine economy of the home does not include husband and wife only. Children are taught to obey their parents because the Lord wishes it to be so! Thus the order of authority is set up: Christ, husband, wife, children. For children to go untrained and undisciplined is sure to bring sorrow into the home and calamity upon their lives. A large factor in the modern juvenile problem is the lack of respect for authority in the average home. Visitors from foreign countries often remark about the lack of control exercised upon American children by their parents. Failure to teach this principle is no evidence of great love. It is rather a sign of sentimental negligence on the parents' part.

2 Parents should encourage their children in right things, 3:21. A broken spirit is fatal to youth. More than one young man has turned to a useless (often criminal) life because of overbearing harshness of his parents. This verse warns against the perpetual fault-finding which irritates children so that they become discouraged. On the contrary, let the loving parent encourage a spirit of mutual respect between members of the family and reverence for God's will. Thus the failures of the children will be dealt with in loving firmness and correction of wrongs made. An environment of spiritual values in the home makes discipline of wrong things and

encouragement of right things so much easier. Try it in your home by making Christ its true Head.

3. All service should be rendered in reverence for God, 3:22-25. Paul now uses the instruction for servants to teach all a lesson in what real service means. Observe these verses suggest: Do not commit evil even if no one is looking. Whatever there is to do, work at it heartily with a good will not from servile restraint. The Christian serves the Lord, even though he may be working for a man. God is the final judge and He will correct the wrongs and reward the right. Leave such matters to Him. Give yourself to a faithful performance of your duty. That is a way in which you can glorify God.

### **III. Salvation of Others Through the Home.**

Besides family devotions and religious training of the children, the Christian has a religious responsibility outside the home. He covenants “to seek the salvation of my kindred and acquaintances.” Paul gives some suggestions concerning this work in Titus 2:1-8.

1. Win others by teaching sound doctrine, 2:1. There are many false teachers gone out into the world, I John 4:1. In contrast to these, the believer must speak clearly and without apology the truth of the Gospel. If they are not ashamed to stand on street corners and go from house to house to pass out literature and spread their doctrines, why would those who have the truth be hesitant about doing so? There comes a time when silence would be sin. To know the truth and not share it would be such a time! We were instructed that we may instruct others. Sound doctrine will promote repentance, faith, and salvation in many who hear. There is no more blessed ministry than this!

2. Win others by observing proper Christian conduct, 2:2-6. There are few things so impressive to the sinner as “the unspoken sermon” of true dedication to Christ. Knowing a profession which is not lived in demonstration is ineffective, Paul admonishes various age groups as to the standard for Christian living. Thus will the testimony for Christ be effective.

(1) Older men are to be marked by sobriety and doctrinal purity, verse 2. They are to be “sober” (in abstaining from wine), “grave” (meaning to be august, venerable, worthy of respect), “temperate” (curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled), and “sound in faith, love, and patience.” To be “sound” means “to be in good health.” The “faith” in which one is to be sound is the body of Christian doctrine. This soundness is to be demonstrated by the exercise of the love which the Holy Spirit puts in the believer's heart, Romans 5:5. Doctrinal purity and Divine love unite to produce a man who can stay loyal in spite of trials, i. e., he is “patient.”

(2) Aged women are to be holy in example and teaching, verse 3. Paul's expression here denotes that the settled manner of life of aged women is to be one of personal holiness. Their dress, speech, habits, and instruction are to reflect this spirit. Speech is to be marked by freedom from slanderous conversation (the word "slanderer" sometimes refers to the devil). Elderly women have no business being "given to much wine." On the contrary, these women are to be instructors of those less mature. The subject of instruction is to be "good things" worthy of obedience and imitation.

(3) Young women are to be pure and loyal to their homes, verses 4-5. Older women have the obligation to train young women in proper conduct. These younger women are taught to be pure in mind and spirit, as well as chaste in look, word, and act. They are to be marked by love for their husbands and children. Their main interest is to be in the home where they are to be "workers at home." This concern for the home will lead to an attitude of goodness (kindness) toward its members. Moreover, the good wife will not rebel against the loving rule of her husband, but will rather be in submission to him as God has ordained. Thus, the reprobate will have no occasion to speak reproachfully of the word of God which they profess.

(4) Young men are to exercise self-control, verse 6. Titus is told to "exhort" these various peoples to use these standards for their conduct. To exhort means to urge with humility, love and kindness. The minister has no autocratic authority over the Lord's people. Thus, the young men are "exhorted" to be sober-minded. This means young men are to "exercise self-control, to think soberly of one's self, to curb one's passions." This follows Paul's admonition to Timothy, "*Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart,*" II Timothy 2:22.

3. Win others by setting the proper personal example, 2:7-8. The teacher is not beyond obedience to his teaching. The preacher is to obey the principles which he preaches to others. Thus Titus is called to holiness of conduct so he may be an example to others. He is not to be high-handed, demanding, and domineering. Instead, he must be the "pattern" (example) for the rest of the flock, Matthew 5:16. His life must be "uncorrupt" and so free from any lower motive. His manner of speech is to be beyond condemnation. In fact, so pure is to be the life and conduct of the man of God that any person who would find fault with him would be put to shame because no evil thing could be found. This person who walks so closely to his Heavenly Father will surely be used of Him in the winning of souls.

CONCLUSION—This lesson has considered the importance of the Christian's life in his home and outside of it. The Baptist has agreed to

maintain family worship and the spirit of Christ in his home. He has also obligated himself to seek the salvation of those inside and outside his home. Now the way is open to service. How do you measure up in this respect? What if each member of your church were just like you? If your church fails in either of these areas, help to solve its problem by making yourself measure up to the worthy standard set out in this lesson. Next Sunday we will study the effect of devotion to God upon social relationships.

### QUESTIONS

1. Explain: “the home is the basic unit of society.
2. Why should each home have a family devotional period?
3. What is the proper relation between husband and wife?
4. Discuss religious education in the home as set out in today’s study.
5. Describe the conduct of aged men.
6. Describe the conduct of aged women.
7. Describe the conduct of young women.
8. Describe the conduct of young men.
9. Describe the conduct of a teacher or preacher.
10. Read aloud the portion of the Church Covenant studied today. Briefly discuss it.