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"When Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19:5).

More Than a House

Lesson Subject: Christian families should resolve to have a Christ-centered home.

L57. Date: January 1988. **Text:** Luke 19:5-7; Ephesians 5:22-25, 28; 6:1, 2; Colossians 3:5, 8, 9. **Topic:** Home; Family.

"It takes a heap o' living to make a house a home."

And it takes more than just "living" to make a house a Christian home. The ABC's of living together as a Christian household are "Always Be Christian."

What causes a house to become a Christian home? A Christian home is not just a place where believers in Christ live but where Christ is the head. It is a home where He is recognized as decisions are made, plans are projected, relationships are shared, and life is lived in the daily details. In the Christian home, Christ is recognized, the Word is read, prayers are said, and lives are disciplined according to His will.

According to that explanation, is yours a Christian home or is it only a place where Christians live? The aim of this study is to help you to have a Christ-centered home.

I. GOD IS HONORED IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME

A. God instituted the home. He created the man and the woman and brought them together in the first marriage union. He expressed His blessings on their union, commanding them to *"be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion"* (Genesis 1:28). He approved the plan that *"a man (shall) leave his father and his mother, and*

shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh " (Genesis 2:24). Since God instituted the home, it can honor Him above all other institutions. Make your home God honoring by making it a truly Christian home.

B. God sanctified the home. How does God sanctify our homes today?

1. He approves our marriages. His Holy Spirit caused Paul to write, "*I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully*" (I Timothy 5:14).

2. He is a guest in our homes. Jesus shows God's concern for home life by being a guest in many homes. His visit in the home of a tax collector named Zacchaeus was not understood by the crowd, but it showed God's concern for that man and benefited the home greatly (Luke 19:1-10). His visit to the home of Levi, where He ate with a crowd of publicans, caused criticism, but He showed His concern for the social outcasts (Luke 5:27-29). He went into the home of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). His repeated visits to the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary showed His delight in a truly Christian home (John 12:1, 2).

3. He brings salvation into our homes. Salvation came to the home of Zacchaeus, as well as to the home of the jailer in Philippi (Acts 16:25-34). Salvation comes to any home where the message of Jesus is welcomed and believed.

4. He is the head of our homes. When the Bible says "*the head of every man is Christ*" (I Corinthians 11:3), it means that Christ is the head of every home where a man is head. Nothing so sanctifies a home as recognizing the authority of Jesus over it. His will becomes our will and He leads us in blessed paths of family relationships.

C. God honored the home. "*Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*" (Hebrews 13:4). When we realize that God wants us to hold marriage as precious, of great value, and honorable in all its aspects, we will see how much honor He confers on the good home. What a challenge that is for each of us to make our home a Christian one!

D. God protects the home. The prohibitions of divorce and the principles of mutual respect and love between family members are God's ways of protecting the home. He protects it from breaking apart by governing divorce. He protects it from abuse by principles governing the relationships of husband and wife, parents and children. What value He puts on the home! Thank God for His protection which is extended over our homes today, if we will live by the principles He set forth in Holy Scripture. You can read some of those guidelines in Matthew 19:3-12.

II. ROLES ARE FILLED IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME

A. The husband has a role to fill in the home. God requires five things of him relating to his wife.

1. He is to assume the headship of his wife. *"The husband is the head of the wife"* (Ephesians 5:23). God has made him the head; he has no choice in the matter. He is responsible for that headship whether he fills it or not. He will account to God for it.

2. He is to love his wife. Ephesians 5:25-29 shows the kind of love that the husband should have toward his wife. It is to be holy — *"as Christ also loved the church."* It is to be sacrificial — as He *"gave himself for it."* It is to be uplifting — *"that he might sanctify and cleanse."* It is to be intimate — *"that he might present it to himself."* It is to be affectionate — as He *"nourisheth and cherisheth it."* It is to be exclusive — the husband is to *"leave his father and mother, and . . . be joined unto his wife"* (verse 31). A wife has no need to fear in submitting to a husband who loves her like that.

3. He is to honor his wife. *"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered"* (1 Peter 3:7). The man who is considerate of his wife and shows deference to her, honoring her as equal to him before God, will fulfill this requirement. May all husbands do so before God.

4. He is not to be bitter against his wife. That is the clear command of Colossians 3:19. Bitterness may express itself in a resentful spirit or in harsh treatment. Either an attitude or an act of severity and discourtesy toward the wife is strictly forbidden of God. The man who makes his wife suffer emotionally or physically because of his bad spirit will surely answer to God, for he is sinning against God's Word. There should be no bitterness in a Christian home.

5. He is to sanctify his wife. *"The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband"* (1 Corinthians 7:14). She is sanctified in that she is brought under the influence of Jesus Christ as the husband lives the Christ life before her. She is sanctified in that she is cut off from the sinful life of unbelievers, since the husband will let Christ be the head of the home.

Those are things that the husband can do to have a Christian home. If he leads, loves, honors, and is tender and pure before his wife, he will influence her to serve God also.

B. The wife has a role to fill in the home. God requires four things of her in relation to her husband.

1. She is to submit to her husband. She is to submit to him as a religious duty, "*as unto the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18). She is to submit to him even if she is a Christian and he is not (I Peter 3:1). By submission she will obey God and influence her husband for Christ.

2. She is to love her husband. The older women are to teach the younger women to love their husbands and children (Titus 2:4). Returning his love to her in the Lord, she causes the home to be a blessing.

3. She is to obey her husband. While submit refers to her attitude of spirit, obey refers to her actions. To obey in action without submission in spirit would cause resentment and discord. How much better it is to submit and obey as great women of the Bible did (I Peter 3:1-6).

4. She is to reverence her husband. To reverence is to keep a spirit of respect toward him. She expresses that spirit by obeying, praising, and honoring him. It makes him love her the more, so both of them are rewarded by her expressions of respect. This is essential to a happy home life.

C. Children have a role to fill in the Christian home. It is twofold. (1) Children are to obey their parents "*in the Lord: for this is right*" (Ephesians 6:1). God promises a reward for obedience and a severe judgment for disobedience to this command. (2) Children are to honor their parents, both their father and mother (Ephesians 6:2). Honor is the attitude which produces the acts of obedience. Children must be taught to honor and obey. Parents are not being selfish when they require that of their children. They are obeying God and giving proper training.

D. Parents have a role to fill in the Christian family. Their relationships to their children are fourfold. (1) They should love each child sincerely (Titus 2:4). Personality or physical traits must not change that devotion to each child. (2) They should teach their child to obey, as Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20 require. Without such teaching, trouble is ahead for the child and heartbreak is ahead for the parents. (3) They should discipline their child consistently. (4) They should control the child constantly. The purpose of all parental discipline and control is to send out into society a self-disciplined and self-controlled person. May God give us Christian homes which will do just that.

III. RELATIONSHIPS ARE WHOLESOME IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME

God requires purity in four areas, according to Colossians 3:5-9. They are sexual, spiritual, emotional, and vocal.

A. There must be sexual purity in the home (Colossians 3:5). God has placed a total prohibition on adultery (Exodus 20:14) and set the death

penalty for committing it (Leviticus 20:10). There must be no fornication or adultery, no impurity of a dirty mind (II Peter 2:9, 10), no uncontrolled passion (Ephesians 4:19), no evil and unholy desires that are unchecked (I Peter 2:11). That is God's requirement for sexual purity.

B. There must be spiritual purity in the home (Colossians 3:5, 8). A covetous desire for other people's goods is strictly forbidden (Exodus 20:17). Covetousness is not only sinful, it is useless. Life does not find its value in material wealth (Luke 12:15). Be humble before God, love Him and seek to obey Him.

C. There must be emotional purity in the home (Colossians 3:8, 9). Resentment is forbidden because *"the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God"* (James 1:20). Those passionate outbursts of rage are forbidden also, for *"he that is soon angry dealeth foolishly"* and *"he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty"* (Proverbs 14:17; 16:32). Ill will and a spiteful spirit must be put away also (Ephesians 4:31). Let love, not anger, control your emotions.

D. There must be vocal purity in the home (Colossians 3:9). All such *"evil communication"* as foulmouthed abuse or rough or abrasive talk is to have no place in the home. It should be replaced by gentleness and complimentary speech (Titus 3:1, 2). Truth only must be spoken (Proverbs 12:22) to the honor of God.

Those are Bible guidelines for making a house a Christian home. They are demanding. They return to the ABC principle mentioned above: **"Always Be Christian."** A Christian home is a blessing to its occupants, a testimony to the community, and a testimony to God. *"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"* (Joshua 24:15.)

QUESTIONS

1. What are the ABC's of a Christian home?
2. How does God sanctify your home?
3. In what way is Christ the head of your home?
4. How does God protect the home?
5. What is the role of the husband in the home?
6. What is the role of the wife in the home?
7. What is the role of children in the home?
8. What is the role of parents in the home?
9. Why must a home be kept pure in all areas?
10. How can you put this study into effect in your home this week?