



“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.

Home Life

Lesson Aim: To promote Christian home life among the families of the church

L452. Date: May 1976. **Text:** Colossians 3:20-25; Titus 2:1-8.

Topic: Church Covenant; Family.

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

Are you aware that it is impossible for you to be a faithful church member unless you have a Christian home? It is true! The Church Covenant to which you agreed upon becoming a member of a Baptist church contains this commitment: “We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion, to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances . . .” Christian home life is vitally related to church membership.

A commonly accepted axiom is “As goes the homes, so goes the nation.” Equally true is “As goes the homes, so goes the church.” The home is the basic unit of human society. A nation may fall but rise again. A church may be crushed but spring back to vital life. When the homes of a nation are destroyed, havoc falls upon both the nation and the church. On the other hand, honorable home life will bless lives, strengthen churches, and exalt nations. There is little danger of a nation's forsaking God so long as her homes are what God ordained,

How church members act in their homes makes a difference in their church. A congregation composed of individuals in whose homes the Bible is read, prayer is offered, the loved ones are led to Jesus, will be strong and

evangelistic. It is the purpose of this lesson to help you to have that kind of home. The lesson aim is “to promote Christian home life among the families of the church.”

The lesson comments deal with “the husband, the wife, the children, and the home.” Make it personal by thinking “my husband, my wife, my children, and my home.”

I. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The home is made up of people. The relationship each member of the household bears to other members of the household will determine what kind of home they have. God knew how important those relationships are. He set forth some principles to govern there. They are recorded in Colossians (3:18-22). Examine those principles to see if you are contributing all you can to the welfare of the people in your home.

A. Submissive wife — **“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord,”** Colossians 3:18. That admonition is so clear it would be almost impossible to misunderstand it. To make certainty even more certain, the Holy Spirit recorded it in almost the exact words in Ephesians 5:22. As if that were not enough, He expanded it by an explanation and illustration in Ephesians 5:23, 24. **“... 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 every thing.”**

God ordained the hierarchy of authority in the home. It was not a matter of human convenience, nor an invention of some self-assertive men. The wife should be submissive to her husband, not because he deserves it but because God requires it. A wife's submission to her husband is an indication of her devotion to the Lord.

B. Loving husband — **“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them,”** Colossians 3:19. The wife's obligation to submit to her husband is counter-balanced by the husband's obligation to love his wife. Which obligation is greater? Which is more demanding? Neither! Both are divine imperatives set upon the married by the sovereign God. No wife need fear submission to her husband, if he obeys the injunction, **“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.

Authority administered in love is tender, thoughtful, and fair. The wife who has a husband willing to die for her (as Christ was willing to die

for the church) will be safe in her submission. Arbitrary authority, which many women fear in submission to their husbands, is never exercised where there is such sacrificial love. Loving service and tender concern for the entire family will mark the man who heads the home with the spirit that God requires.

No sight is more beautiful than a home where husband and wife share the relationship which God ordained in Colossians 3:18, 19. That kind of home greatly strengthens the church. Will you resolve to make that your kind of home?

C. Obedient children — **“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord,”** Colossians 3:20. Children should be taught to obey their parents as a religious duty. They should because the Lord tells them to do so.

Both parents and children have an obligation before God concerning obedience. It is the parents' duty to require obedience. It is the child's duty to render obedience. For either to fail in his duty will bring great sorrow to the home. A major cause of juvenile problems is the lack of respect for authority which is encouraged by lack of discipline in many homes.

Children who would please God must have the right attitude toward their parents. God commanded, **“Honour thy father and thy mother . . .”** Exodus 20:12. Honor will be expressed by obedience. God, therefore, further commanded, **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right,”** Ephesians 6:1. Since the command came from God, each person must account to God for his attitude of respectful obedience to his earthly parents. Respect for and obedience to parents is a religious duty resting upon every son and daughter.

D. Tender father — **“Father, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged,”** Colossians 3:21. Be careful of the interpretation of that verse. Some modern child psychologists insist that a parent should never say, “No,” to a child. “It will tend to restrict his fullest development,” they insist. That is not what the Bible says. God insists that discipline and training should be administered in such a way that the child's spirit is not broken. The meaning is expressed by Weymouth “as do not fret and harass your children.” Phillips translated it, “Don't overcorrect.” Knox preferred, “. . . parents . . . must not rouse . . . children to resentment.” Tenderness is to mark the relationship of the parent with the child.

“If children must yield unquestioning obedience, then the parent must be on his guard lest he discourage the child by unreasonable demands, by the brusqueness of his approach, by humiliating his child before others, or by any other failure to treat the child with understanding. Over-severity can so

crush the spirit that the child loses heart in the unequal struggle”—Herbert M. Carson. Let obedience be met with love, and the parent-child relationship will be beautiful. “The twig is to be bent with caution, not broken in the efforts of a rude and hasty zeal”—Eadie.

E. Faithful employees — **“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ,”** Colossians 3:22-24. Do those verses have any meaning in a culture where slavery is no longer practiced? They do. They underscore the fact of the Lordship of Christ. They relate all work to Him, not just to one's human overseer. They require that the quality of the Christian's secular work be such as would please Jesus. Duties must be performed with pure motives and an upright heart.

Those principles apply in your work. The Christian should be the best employee an employer ever had. An honest day's work should be given for a day's pay. It is a sin for a Christian to take time from an employer for which he is being paid. That is theft. Slaves, who had no control over their conditions or circumstances, were admonished to work faithfully. How much more should a Christian employee render honest, faithful, ungrudging work in return for the pay for which his services were enlisted. Work heartily, as if serving the Lord, for so you are. “. . . Ye serve the Lord Christ,” verse 24.

II. FAMILY CHARACTER

Each member of the family, regardless of age, is to contribute to the stability of the home. Each is important. Each is included in God's evaluation of home life. Examine the principles recorded in Titus 2:1-8. Find where you belong in the list: aged man, aged woman, young woman, young man. Examine your life in the light of the description which God gave of the kind of character you should have in order for your home to be all it should be. That is a part of the “sound doctrine” which God decreed to be followed in maintaining a truly Christian home.

A. Character of aged men — **“ . . . That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience,”** Titus 2:2. That is quite a demanding list. An aged man is expected to maintain his Christian integrity and purity the same as when he was younger.

Examine the qualities which are to mark an aged man. He should be

“sober” — temperate, circumspect, collected in spirit, and abstaining from alcoholic beverage. He ought to be “grave” — of august and reverend aspect, venerated for character. He should be “temperate” — keeping himself under the control of a sound and wholesome attitude of mind. He ought to be “sound in the faith” — holding Christian convictions which are free from admixture of error, holding true and uncorrupt doctrine. He should be sound “in charity” — filled with the self-giving love of God toward men in need. He ought to be sound “in patience” — holding fast his principles in spite of misfortunes and trials, bearing bravely and calmly all circumstances while holding allegiance to Jesus Christ. That marks one whose years of experience have brought him to true spiritual maturity as a real man of God.

B. Character of aged Women — “... **The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things,**” Titus 2:3. The expectation for aged Christian women is as demanding as that for aged Christian men.

“Likewise,” in the same way, the Christian women's “behaviour should be such as becometh holiness.” Reverent in demeanor and bearing, they ought to act in such a way as becomes people who belong to God. How will that be?

(1) Aged Christian women “must not be “false accusers” — scandal-mongers or malicious gossips. (2) They must not become addicted to strong drink. (3) They must seek to be “teachers of good things” — instructing others by precept and example that they might know to do what is right. (4) They must give special attention to “teach the young women” — train them in Christian conduct and home life.

Review the qualities expected in aged Christian men and women. Observe what a gentle, mature, Christ-like spirit is expected of them. Free from fretting, complaining, criticizing, and gossiping, they must manifest the difference which Christ makes in old age.

C. Character of the young women — “... **Teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands . . .**” Titus 2:5.

Young Christian women should be trained in conduct which agrees with their profession. Orderly behavior for a young Christian wife and mother is to show affection to her husband and tender love to her children. They be sober-minded, sensible, and able to exercise good judgment. Their business is to keep morally pure in mind and conduct. Their primary interest is to be their home, keeping house in such a way as to honor God. There is no substitute for old fashioned goodness, so they are to have that quality

also. As an act of obedience to God, and as an example to their children and acquaintances, they are to be subordinate to the authority of their husbands as God commanded. Such women will be a shining example and witness to Jesus Christ.

D. Character of young men — **"Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded,"** Titus 2:6. Self-restraint is required of young Christian men. Prudent, temperate living behooves all who name the name of Christ, but it is particularly called for during the vigor of young adulthood. Let the young men be sensible. Let them live orderly lives. Let them exercise good judgment. Thereby, they will be witnesses for Christ.

Timothy was such a young man. Paul admonished him to teach only the unadulterated truth in a dignified manner. His message should be wholesome, unobjectionable, and closed to criticism. Thank God for the young Christian men who, following such admonition, leave no room for the enemy to scorn.

Be an example of what a Christian should be in your home. Suppose each member of your church lived in an exemplary manner before his family. What difference it would make in their homes. How many parents could win their children to the Lord, if dad were loving and mother were submissive. How many husbands would lead their wives (or wives lead their husbands) to the Lord, if they were what God commands them to be. Multitudes have, through the generations, been brought to Christ because of the testimony of a member of their household. Is there someone in your home whom you should win? Be an example to him.

Have you resolved, because of this study, to "maintain family and secret devotion, to religiously educate your children, to seek the salvation of your kindred and acquaintances"? Make that holy resolve before God for Jesus' sake.

Questions

1. What is a Christian home?
2. Why is Christian home life so important?
3. How can a wife be submissive to her husband?
4. How can a husband cultivate love for his wife?
5. How can parents teach their children obedience?
6. How can fathers make sure that they are tender to their children?
7. How can a Christian be a better employee?
8. How should aged men and women behave? Why?
9. How should young men and women behave? Why?

10. What principles from the study can you apply to make your home more Christian?