

HOW TO BUILD & MAINTAIN A GODLY FAMILY TODAY

Text: Mark 3:25

INTRO: Our homes make up the basic element in society. It has been said, "as goes the home, so goes the nation." If that is true, & I believe it is, our nation is in trouble. It has also been said, "as goes the home, so goes the church." I suggest that many churches are also in trouble.

A typical home has a father, a mother, a couple of children or more. A husband, a wife, sons, daughters. With different tastes, likes & dislikes. Different opinions about various subjects.

Such variety, within limits, is refreshing, even necessary. What one family member lacks, another can supply. But most of the time, we must rise above these differences so that we can stand united in love against Satan & a hostile world that threaten the tranquillity, the welfare and even the existence of our homes.

A house or family divided against itself is ready to self destruct. I have five suggestions that will help our family units stand united against Satan & his efforts to destroy us..

I. HAVE JESUS IN YOUR HOME.

- A. Be a Christian. Marry a Christian. If you are married to someone not a member of the Lord's church, be the kind of Christian who has the best chance of leading your mate to the Lord. And that is usually accomplished more readily by your behavior than by your "preaching." 1 Pet 3:1; 1 Cor 7:16
- B. Read the Bible. Discuss your Bible lessons.
 1. I fear many of us have neglected to do this.
 2. I fear many have become content to read something about the Bible instead of reading the Bible. Even class materials.
- C. Keep prayer a frequent element in your life. Pray for yourself. Pray for other family members. Especially for those you are having trouble getting along with, with those who are facing special difficulties, etc.
- D. Be faithful in attending worship services together as a family. Not just Sunday morning, but as often as you can. Bible classes, gospel meetings, etc.

- E. Deal honestly with one another. You don't have to spout off on every subject. You should not be rude & crude. But you must deal honestly.

Eph 4:25-26, Therefore putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another. 'Be angry, and do not sin', do not let the sun go down on your wrath.

II. DEVELOP AND EXERCISE FORBEARANCE.

- A. Some of the best people in the world are not always easy to get along with. Someone has defined "home" as the place a fellow goes when he's tired of being nice to people. I fear that definition fits most of us sometimes.

- B. The attitude of patience & forgiveness is needed within our church family. It is no less needed in our natural family

Col 3:12-15, Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, & forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

- C. Know from the outset that you will not always get your way and that it wouldn't be good if you did.

III. MAKE YOUR CHIEF PLEASURE CENTER AROUND YOUR HOME. Find activities that you like to do together. If every member of the family scatters in different directions to pursue their pastimes and enjoy their best times, they grow apart instead of growing together.

IV. CULTIVATE A SYMPATHY OF OCCUPATION. Take an interest in the work of your spouse, the school work & extra-curricula activities of your children.

- A. Sometimes a man doesn't want to burden his wife with the problems he encounters at work. And often this may be a wise decision. But there ought to be something he can share with her about his work, and things she can share with him about her work, whether she is a home-maker or has a career outside the home.
- B. Husbands & wives, parents & children, ought to be able to discuss together the activities that take up most of their time, & get a sympathetic ear just about any time, and perhaps some good advice at least once in a while.

V. LET LOVE PREVAIL. LET IT REIGN. LET IT GROW.

Eph. 5:25. Not a suggestion, a command.

[older women:] Admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, (Titus 2:4).

- A. Children in the home must honor, respect, & learn from their parents. Eph. 6:1-2.
- B. Adult children, even after leaving home & forming homes of their own, are to continue to show honor & respect to their parents, caring for their needs, in a sense Repaying the parents for the love & care the parents gave them when they were unable to provide for themselves.

1 Tim 5:4, 8, 15, But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home & to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God... But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever... If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, January 14, 1996

Exton, PA, October 29, 2000 (lectureship)
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, December 12, 2004