

Bible Study on The Christian Home – Handout 2

The Role of God in the Family

Grace Bible Chapel

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Introduction

Before discussion can move into the details of what the Bible declares concerning a Christian home, it must first be established that God has the significant role, even right to determine the definition, and character of a Christian home. The old saying “a man’s home is his castle” does not really apply biblically. The Christian home by definition is not autonomous. It cannot be Christian in name only, but the foundation, and driving philosophy is based solely on confidence in God and His Word. The attitude behind the development of the home philosophy must be clearly defined in the minds of the home leaders. It is shaped according to who God is, and thereby according to His Word.

Christian homes fit into the overall purpose of God:

- What is the purpose for every created thing? 1 Chron 29:11
- What is our purpose in the things we do? 1 Cor 10:31
- What is our purpose then in the family 1 Chron 16:24
- God created the family as one of the primary institutions to deal with the effects of sin (Deut 6:2).

Christ’s right over our homes:

- Col 1:15 – Who is Jesus Christ?
 - Image – likeness – He is God
 - Firstborn – reference to Jewish heritage – He is the heir of all things – He owns all
 - All things created through Him, and for Him – the purpose of all existence is to honor Him
 - Before all things - eternal
 - In Him all things hold together – sovereign
 - Head of the church – the chief in charge, the leader, all others are subordinate
 - Firstborn from the dead – the heir of all who are resurrected
 - Will come to have first place in everything – reference to the coming literal kingdom – but also true now (Eph 1:22)
- 1 Cor 11:3 – the head over man and therefore the head of every family
- Col 2:10 – head over all rule and authority

Christ’s priority in the home:

What should play a greater position of priority in your mind - your family, work, health, convenience, or God? You may answer quickly that God should hold the greater position, but is that happening in reality? In order to understand the role of God in the family we must first establish God as the priority above all things (Mat 22:31). This does not mean that we can impress God, or contribute in some manner to our salvation. This only means this is “our reasonable service of worship” (Rom 12:1), and that we are not our own and therefore are called to glorify God (1 Cor 6:20). We cannot contribute or delete something from His glory, we can only comply with His glory, or thereby place it in its appropriate place by living obediently for Him. This is our privilege and responsibility.

- 1 Cor 6:19-20 – Even our own bodies belong to Him, for Him to use for His glory.
- Luke 9:23 – there is a placement of God before self as a continual theme of the true Christian.
- Rom 12:1-2 - It applies to the individual, but it extends from the individual into the family, as individuals make up the family. Each member of the family at every age should be led into the teaching and instruction of God, and honoring Him as top priority.
- 1 Cor 7:29 - In this verse we have a most unusual statement. This statement is not declaring that men should no longer care for their families, or live promiscuously – it is declaring the priority of serving God first, even above the family.
 - Time has been shortened - The idea is that life is short, and there is only so much time to devote in service to God and that plans in life should all be formed in view of this truth.

- Should be as though they had none – This does not mean that they are to treat wives with unkindness or neglect, or fail in the duties of care, love, and fidelity. It is to be taken in a general sense of priority, they were to live above the world's standard. Their affections to God are first, and must be accomplished without hindrance, as if they had no wife. We will see later this has much to do with the management of the family.
- 1 Cor 7:33-34 states a fact of marriage, that sometimes the wife can be requiring attention that will take the husband away from his singular commitment and service to the Lord. This is given in the context of considerations before marriage. One of the goals of premarital counsel should be to make priorities clear. The wife is to be a helper, and supporter, and in the right atmosphere of commitment to God by both spouses this is the case. These are matters to build in the home. Again, this has much to do with family management.
- Therefore Paul is not referring to abandonment of the family, or to selfishness, he is referring to the priority of service to God comes before all the likes, dislikes, desires, wishes, etc. of those individuals in the family. The goal is to have the home (family) working as a unified harmonious team with the same perspective of living foremost for God.
- Luke 14:26 - In fact if it should come to a choice between allegiance to the family or to God, we are to be willing to choose God even if it means falling out with our family, or even losing them.
- Everything must be subservient to God first (Genesis 22:1-14).
- At the heart of the family as an instrument of instruction and example is complete love and devotion to the Lord (Deut 6:5). The same command stated as the greatest commandment by Christ (Mat 22:31).
- The exclusive nature of the focus of the family and chief role of God as the singular focus of top priority is shown in the statement made in Deut 6:4. This is not merely a theological statement of God being a monotheistic God, but that He is the One exclusive source of worship, devotion, commitment, reverence, and obedience – the focus that must be present above all else.
 - Marriage then is not about personal self-fulfillment or even family fulfillment (anymore than it is in the church). Nor is it about the parent, or parent's living out their dream. It is about living first and foremost serving God.
 - The number 1 relationship of every member of the family should be pointed first to Christ and then to one another.
 - The family must work together in harmony as a unit, with the highest priority of each member to serve the Lord.
 - The members of the family must know by continued example and instruction that before anything else the family unit's priority is serving God.

Having this kind of understanding of the Lord's role, which is a requirement of the true Christian, will influence the attitude of the family. If there is not a top priority to place God above all else, then the family will suffer, and will not function as "a true Christian home."

Commitment to Christ in the home:

Joshua 24:13 – 15

- Joshua is one of the strongest characters shown in Scripture. Although there had to be weaknesses and failures in his relationship to God, none are given in Scripture. He is shown to be a stalwart of faith, character, and commitment.
- Joshua is also one of the greatest leaders in the Bible. The husband in particular, and the wife in full support should maintain a testimony before their family demonstrating determined leadership of devotion to Christ.
- Joshua lived his life as an open book of faith put into practice. It is no wonder that he made his commitment and the commitment of his family to God a public matter. Every Christian's home should be publicly recognized as a place committed to the Lord.
 - Vs 13 – just as true in America. All blessings come from God, and He can take them or give them (Isaiah 45:7). We are undeserving just as they were undeserving (Deut 7:7). Our times are in His hands (Psalms 31:15). There is a correlation between our faithfulness, and allegiance to God and our very well-being (Ps 37). This includes the well-being of our families.
 - Vs 14 – fear the Lord – reverence Him – fear is at the root of this word mixed with a recognition of the awesomeness of God. God controls our very existence, our well-being. That is why the fear

of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10). Appropriate fear is to be fostered in the home environment.

- Serve Him – the root of this word is slave. The idea is submit to God in all things – He is my master – I am a love slave.
- Sincerity – entire integrity – this is not something that is part-time – absolute commitment.
- Truth – not pretentious, or partial – in genuine faithfulness.
- Put away – lit – turn off – have no interest or consideration for anything that distracts your relationship with God.
- Vs 15 – disagreeable – lit – it is evil – make up your mind if it is reasonable right now! If God has not treated you fairly, and you are convinced it is not the right thing to do to serve Him, then pick what it is that you are going to give yourself over to. Get it straight in your mind!
 - As for me – commitment must be set by the head of the home (Gen 18:19). This was absolute certainty by Joshua. You knew that he meant it with every fiber of his energy and being.
 - And my house – he would rule and shape the commitment of his whole household.
 - We will serve the Lord – same word as vs 14 (root slave) – the idea is that we (my house) will be in bondage to the Lord. Whatever glorifies Him, whatever He commands, whatever fosters obedience and conformity to His will and Word is exactly what we will do. The “we” being Joshua taking the responsibility of oversight for his household.

The power to have and sustain a Christian home:

Psalm 127:1-5

- Builds the house – referring not to the structure, but the success of the family. Everyone is building their home – relationships, integrity, stability, quality, longevity, and value.
- Guards the house – lit – protects and preserves. This is the responsibility of the leader of the home, and how can he best do this? How can he have a successful family that is protected?
- Unless – idea is that it is entirely in the hands of God. How contrary this is to most thinking.
- Notice the adjectives used to describe the effort outside of God building and guarding – vain, rise up early, retire late – no matter how much effort or energy it will not be successful. Painful – when God is not in the picture, as contrasted with He gives His beloved sleep – rest.
- Children – spoken of as a gift, and as a blessing – however, this is only in the context of the Lord building the house. Children are a blessing when they grow up righteous, not when they grow up evil. There is no greater joy (3 John 4).

The principle for faithful family leaders:

Psalm 112:1-3

- Vs 1 – his character and commitment (fears the Lord, delights in His commandments)
- Vs 2-3 – his reward:
 - descendants mighty on the earth – will be valiant, powerful in the faith (as shown from next sentence of the upright) – same word used of David’s “mighty men” in 2 Sam 10:8
 - generation of the upright will be blessed – they will be a blessing to the next generation
 - wealth and riches are in his house – the word “wealth” means sufficient or enough, and “riches” possessions, physical blessings – their needs will always be met
 - righteousness endures forever – true faith, continue in the things of God, and ultimately have eternal life

Point: Contrast with Ex 34:7 – God’s judgment on the sins of the father’s to their son’s.

Practically – how should the end product (the Christian home) appear?

- A dad and mom who are known as dedicated first and foremost to the Lord
- A dad and mom who are working together to accomplish a home environment of:
 - Uncompromising devotion to the Word of God (Titus 1:9).
 - Devotion and commitment to the church - God’s local assembly in this dispensation (Eph 5:25; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 2:8; 1 Tim 3:15).
 - Conversation, interest, time, energy, and effort in the things of God (Mat 6:21; Titus 1:8).
 - Obedience to the will of God in all matters of life (Mat 7:16; Gal 5: 22-24; Titus 1:6-7).
 - Submissive children that are well managed and under control (1 Tim 3:4).