

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Lesson 2

What is a Christian Home?

INTRODUCTION

- A. The Christian home, while it is surrounded by foreign, hostile and shattering influences, is still the single greatest force for God and good in the world today. The home still has the biggest impact upon a child in this godless world.

The average church has a child 1% of his time; the home has him 83% of the time; and the school for the remainder. We are too often trying to do in our churches on 1% basis what we cannot accomplish. We are neglecting this choice 83% period when children are exposed to parents on a very dynamic interpersonal level. The home marks a child for life. (Howard Hendricks, Heaven Help The Home.)

- B. The Christian home is basic to true Christianity and without strong homes there will never be strong churches. God ordained the home (family unit) before He instituted government (society) or the church. Why? Because the home is fundamental to both. Everything in the local church and in society should be designed to strengthen the family unit.
- C. In America today, many secular educators, social scientists and politicians are trying to destroy the traditional home, bringing new definitions to marriage, children and home. Socialists, feminists and homosexuals have set a course to destroy the home as we know it as Christians.
- D. Even Christians can subtly destroy the home. How? By having so many local church activities, they erase the activity of the home. Local churches which have something going on every night of the week are destroying the family and this is sin. The primary task of Christian Education in the church should be to train adults in how to be good parents in order that they in turn might teach their children basic Christianity in the home.

In contrast, we are suggesting a church should be primarily committed to training parents to do the work God has called them to do, not trying to do their work for them. The chief job of the home, as conceived by God, is to train the family members to live fruitfully in home, church and society . . . there is no second force in the life of a child compared with the impact of his home. The compelling crisis today is the training and equipping of parents to do the job (Howard Hendricks).

- E. If a local church gives the appearance of being alive with the activity and produces poor home lives among its members, it has failed its primary task as a local church. Succeeding in church and failing at home is sin. We Christians must get our priorities straight and put the home first.
- F. God has given specific instruction in the Bible on how to establish a Christian home and when these commands and principles are applied, there will be the blessing of God. Setting forth a Christian home is not like flying by the seat of the pants, because the rules for navigation of a home are in the Bible. We can trust the Bible and know God honors His Word.

- G. The time to start a Christian home is when two Christian people are first married, for it is much easier to build a spiritual foundation when there is no wrong learning to undo. However, in God's providence He often saves people who have been in the world for many years with no understanding of the Christian home. People, who are saved later in life, may have had a bad marriage and the children have been influenced by worldly thinking. It is harder to establish a Christian home under these conditions but it is not impossible.
- H. God will honor the parents who put His Word to work in their lives. One of the problems with being saved later in life is that there are no role models in a person's life to follow as to what a Christian home is. A person may not know what a Christian home is because he or she has never seen one. We do many of the same things we saw in our unsaved parents, but add prayer. Ultimately, however, each Christian must come back to the Bible to establish a Christian home and trust God along to build it.

“Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat--for he grants sleep to those he loves. Sons are a heritage from the LORD children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man who quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies” (Psa. 127:1-5).

- I. Those who are committed to establishing a Christian home will have the blessing of the Lord. *“But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” (Josh. 24:15).*

When I became a Christian from a pagan background, I knew what I did not want my home to be, reacting to my own worldly non-Christian home, but I did not know what a real Christian home looked like. Consequently the first ten years of married and family life were very difficult on my wife and my children. I did some good things, but I also made my share of mistakes and even failures.

WHAT A CHRISTIAN HOME IS NOT

- A. It is Not a Secular, Non-Christian Home.
 - 1. It is not unusual or strange that in 1992 we must tell Christians their homes are not to be patterned after the homes of the unsaved world. Christians especially in affluent America, have often established homes on materialistic values and motives as has the world and this has resulted in crippled Christian homes. True Christians base their viewpoint of life upon the Bible and not upon the carnal ideas of lost men and women.
 - 2. What makes your home different from your unsaved neighbor's home? Is it that you have moral lives? Many unsaved parents have moral lives. Is it that you love your children? Many non-Christian parents love their children. Is it that you exercise discipline in your family? Yet, there are some unbelievers who discipline their families well.
 - 3. It is obvious these things mentioned are to be part of a Christian family, but what makes a Christian family unique? The uniqueness of a Christian family is that Christ lives in the parents and hopefully in all the children (Gal. 2:20). Christ is in the family to help solve the problems of life.
- B. It Is Not Stereotyped.
 - 1. There is no such thing as the ideal Christian family, but there are some Christian families which have progressed further than others in their walk with the Lord.

There are no stereotypes because there are no two families exactly alike. It is impossible for two Christian families to be identical in everything because no two families have the exact kinds of personalities or the same set of problems.

2. It is not wrong to admire a Christian family and let this be a motivation for you to have a solid Christian home, but it is wrong and often causes great guilt when Christian families try to be exactly like other Christian families.

I have a brother Gary who is six years younger than me. Gary became a Christian through my witness to him. We came from the same family, have the same crummy baggage carried into our Christian lives and we know the same Lord. Yet, we are different when it comes to the family. Gary has devotions around the table with his family every day and then he and his wife talk very little about spiritual things. Carol and I rarely have sit down devotions, but we talk about Christ together all the time. Neither Gary nor I are right. We are different.

C. It Is Not A Utopia.

1. Some rather naive people often think a Christian home is perfect or almost perfect and whatever problem may be experienced are very nominal compared to that of the unsaved family. We often forget that Christian families are made up of sinners saved by grace, who still have a sin nature indwelling them which often manifests itself in one form of rebellion or another.
2. All or some children in a Christian family are sinners because they are not yet saved. In a Christian home, parents have disagreements and displays of anger among themselves and with their children. Adjustments have to be made between husband and wife in the areas of money, sex and lifestyles.
3. Parents have conflicts with their children. Children of Christian parents throw temper tantrums, lack motivation and sometimes do poorly in school. Children of Christian parents sometimes dabble in the areas of sex, drugs and alcohol. Most all teenagers in a Christian family will go through a time of rebellion.
4. Realizing Christians and members of a Christian family have sin natures can cause members of a family to relax and live in a real world. This does not excuse any member of the family from his or her responsibility to repent of sin or face the consequences from God. However, the great majority of problems in a Christian home are due to sin, and if this is the case then there is hope for Christ died for sin and sin can be repented of by true believers.

Christians are able to acknowledge the fact and in time, learn to anticipate and prepare for sin. They of all people, should never rely upon rationalizations, excuses, or blame-shift (although, of course, as sinners they sometimes do) to try to explain away their sins. They do not have to cover up, for all Christians know that Christians sin. There can be, therefore, a certain amount that Christians sustain to one another, especially in the home. I am by no means suggesting that we may be relaxed about sin; exactly not that. what I am trying to say; however, is that Christians do not need to spend anxious hours of futile endeavor trying to cover their tracks. They do not need to think up ways to deceive the fellow next door in to thinking that they are sterling specimens of humanity. They may freely admit what they know is true: that they have failed to do the will of God. With the freedom to admit the truth comes the

possibility of repentance, and with repentance they can expect forgiveness and help from God and from one another (Jay Adam , Christian Living in the Home).

D. It Is Not a Panacea.

1. A Christian home is not a cure-all which gives instantaneous relief to all problems. A Christian home has many trials, difficulties and problem, but it also has Christ to whom the family can go for spiritual strength when crisis arise.
2. Surely a well run Christian home should generally have fewer gross problem than the non-Christian home, but there are problems and there is to be a constant dealing with these problems as they come up.
3. Christ gives Christians in a home the power to cope with problems as they arise and prevent problems before they come up. Christ is for and with the Christian hone.
4. A truly Christian home is a place where sinners live; but it is also a place where the members of that home admit the fact and understand the problem, know what to do about it, and as a result grow by grace.
5. The Christian home, then, is a place where sinful persons face the problems of a sinful world. Yet, they face them together with God and His resources, which are all centered in Christ (Col. 2:3). Sinners live in the Christian home, but the sinless Savior lives there too. That is what makes the difference.

WHAT A CHRISTIAN HOME IS

A. A Christian Home Has Believing Parents.

1. A covenant family is where one or both parents are Christians, but a Christian home must have two parents who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. They must be born of God's Spirit and know what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Only truly regenerate parents will ever acknowledge the Bible to be authoritative for their lives, and only the Bible tells them how to establish a Christian home.
3. A home with only one saved parent and the other unsaved could not be called a Christian home even though the unsaved partner will be blessed by the saved partner. With one saved partner there is a covenant family, but it would not be a Christian home because the unbelieving partner would be working against the believing partner in spiritual things.

B. A Christian Home Has Growing Parents.

1. Parents must acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ over them and submit their wills to Christ and His divine design for a Christian home. Christian parents should be growing in grace which affects attitudes and actions which brings about a willingness to change when wrong.
2. There is a holy triangle which makes for right relationships in a marriage and in turn affects the whole family. In this triangle, the closer each partner moves toward God, the closer each is to the other and the closer the wife and the husband become.
3. Christian parents are solving all their problems around Jesus Christ and hopefully each child will be doing the same. Christian parents are growing in grace which involves learning new things about Christ, developing relationships with children and others, openness to the leading of the Lord, willingness to change the lifestyle, and the graciousness to say, "I have sinned" and "I am sorry".

4. In a Christian home, love will dominate. This love will be the love of Christ that flows through a believer who is in fellowship with his or her Lord.
- A. A Christian Home Has The Biblical Roles off Each Family Member Clearly Defined.
1. In the Bible God has established the home and gave functioning roles to each member. God has given these roles because He knows what is best for man and what will bring him the most happiness and make him the best witness for Christ in this sin-cursed world.

*“A discernment of roles is absolutely indispensable for purposeful living, for marital efficiency, and for family functioning”
(Howard Hendricks).*

2. Each believing member of the family is to be in submission to Jesus Christ. *“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph. 5:21).* The husband is the spiritual head and the leader in the home and he is to lead his wife and family by love. *“Husband, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church” (Eph. 5:25).*
3. The husband is appointed by God to be the leader and lover in the family. The wife is to be in submission to her husband and do this as unto the Lord. *“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord” (Eph. 5:22).*
4. Submission of the woman is essential to a proper functioning of a Christian home. Children are to be in respectful submission to their parents. *“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you.” (Deut. 5:16).*
5. Parents are placed over their children so as to have proper channels of authority in a family. Submission to parents is not only a principle that will preserve society, but it is necessary if God’s truth is to be learned and revered by children. *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when your walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deut. 6:4-7).*

According to the Bible, parents are not just the biological origin of their children. They are charged with the responsibility of communicating the knowledge of God. They must help their children know and serve God . . . The authority arrangement which God laid down within the family is not just a convenience It is also a teaching arrangement designed to insure that the knowledge of God will not disappear and parents and their children will continue to serve their God. . . If children never have the opportunity to learn about God and about his Son Jesus from their parents, what can you possibly expect from them when get older? if they never learn that God is the Creator and that in Jesus Christ He can become the Lord of their lives, why should they ever be impressed with the authority of a school administrator or a police officer or a government official! If people never learn the fear of God, they will never properly respect the people who exercise authority in our world. Once a nation loses its grip on the knowledge of God, the doors are open for anything to happen. (Joel Nederhood, The Holy Triangle)

B. A Christian Home Sets Forth a Christian Viewpoint of Life.

1. A Christian home is doing everything to glorify God and to set forth a Christ centered viewpoint of life. A Christ-centered home relates all things back to Christ and His purposes for this world.
2. How then does the Christian home differ from the home next door? The Christian home solves its problems around Christ, using Biblical commands, principles and examples to encounter every outbreak of sin.