

CHRISTIAN HOME IN AN UNCHRISTIAN WORLD

by

John Lawrence

No Copyright

edited for 3BSB by Baptist Bible Believer in the spirit of the Colportage Ministry of a century ago

~ out-of-print and in the public domain ~

Chapter 10

THE CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD

"The Bond of Togetherness"

In the last days there will come a complete breakdown in the home.

This is clearly revealed by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1-5: **"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."**

The Amplified Commentary puts it this way.

"But understand this, that in the last days there will set in perilous times of great stress and trouble -- hard to deal with and hard to bear.

For people will be lovers of self and (utterly) self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate (greedy) desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffers); disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane.

[They will be] without natural (human) affection (callous and inhuman), relentless -- admitting of no truce or appeasement. [They will be] slanderers -- false accusers, trouble makers; intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good.

[They will be] treacherous (betrayers), rash [and] inflated with self-conceit. [They will be] lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than and rather than lovers of GOD.

For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it -- their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession. Avoid [all] such people -- turn away from them"

What a light the Christian home is in this day and hour in which we live. It takes the cooperation of every member of the family for there to be harmony in the home. It only takes one person singing off key to throw discord into the choir, and it only takes one person operating by the sin nature to throw the home into discord.

How foolish it is that we will allow another person who is out of fellowship with the Lord to take us out of fellowship, as if we admired their temper and misery and, therefore, sought to imitate them. Foolish it is, but this is what we do.

They lose their temper, so we lose our temper.
They throw a tantrum, so we throw a tantrum.
They are unhappy and miserable, so we get unhappy and miserable.

Blessed, yea very blessed, is the husband and wife that will remain in fellowship with the Lord even when their spouse or children are out of fellowship, and by remaining in fellowship will be able to bring the others back into fellowship.

Tell me, what good does it do for you also to be out of fellowship? How will that help the situation? You are then no better than anyone else. Anyone can be out of fellowship -- that is no problem. The problem is to remain in fellowship when others are out, to remain sweet when others are sour, and all this without having a martyr's complex. This is the way to heap coals of fire on someone who is mistreating you, or misusing you. Getting out of fellowship makes you no better or greater than they are.

Everyone has his God-given place in the home.

The father is the head of the home and is responsible for everything before GOD. Ephesians 6:4 says: "**And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.**"

The father needs to be careful in the administration of authority so as not to throw anyone into a passion or to incite an outburst of anger. The father is to instruct and discipline his child in the same way that he himself has been disciplined by the Lord. The Lord correctly disciplines and trains us, and so the father is to operate after the Lord's pattern.

Any father that does not have time to bring up his family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is too busy. It is never GOD's will to neglect His revealed will. Before a man is to be used in the work of the Lord, he is to be used in the work of his home; and the Lord's work is never to neglect that home.

Everyone has his or her God-given place in the home.

The mother is to guide the home as its queen. She is to teach the children.

The children are to give obedience and to show respect for the parents that GOD, in His providence, has given to instruct and prepare them for life.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

Let me ask you teenagers something very important. Why is it, do you think, that so many teenagers die in automobile accidents and other mishaps? You read and hear of this all the time. Let me just say that if you think you can go against GOD's Word and GOD's laws and get by, you are mistaken, but it may be too late when you find it out.

The whole key to a blessed and happy Christian home is "togetherness."

Our Lord was raised in a God-fearing home in Israel and the Doctor reports concerning Him: **"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man"** (Luke 2:52).

In this one verse we have mentioned four areas of maturity. They are (1) intellectual; (2) physical; (3) spiritual; (4) social. I would like to take these four areas and look at each of them in light of a Christian home and family of today. Let me reverse the order, however, of each set.

I. Physical

A. Family play

"The family that plays together stays together." Each family must adapt its own fun as a family. This cannot be stereotyped; you must make it yourself and adopt it to your personality.

Usually this starts with two. Genesis 26:8 is a case in point. Later a third one comes along and the three play together. I knew a family that would even play with water hoses in the summertime. This may not meet your need, but it did theirs.

B. Family work

Everything is not just play. Children should be taught that the work around the home is for everyone. We work together and then play together.

It may be yardwork. All can get out and work together. It can be fun that way, while it can be drudgery alone.

It may be redecorating. There is some job for everyone to do. Sure it may be easier for you to do it yourself, but this is not the issue. They need to work with you and learn from you.

Now don't make it all work. Variety is the key.

C. Family recreation

Again this area must be tailor-made to you and your family. It is something that may involve a few minutes or it may be a few days' camping trip.

Children who remember their childhood as some of the happiest times of their lives are blessed indeed, but why shouldn't they all?

II. Intellectual

A. Learn together

In reference to many things we must learn separately, but this is not true in every case. There are things and ways to learn together.

It may be through a hobby as stamps, coins, etc. It may be through an educational game or reading a book of interest together, or learning a foreign language (especially missionaries) as a family. It may be visiting a historical spot, learning all you can before you go.

I know a family that plans their whole vacation ahead of time to see things, not to be able to say they covered 600 miles in a day.

B. Family council

This is a time that the whole family gets together. It may be once a week, once a month, or just whenever needed.

Here, as a family, plans can be made "together" -- where they would like to go and what they want to do "Saturday afternoon" or "Tuesday evening" when Daddy is home.

The family plans their own time together. Each member of the family has an equal say. Remember that variety is the key.

Another important area of the family council is the discussion of problems as a family, i.e., if they include the whole family. Individual problems are taken care of individually. If a problem is too much T.V., discuss it; and let the children work out a schedule for watching the best programs, allowing only so many hours each week. Then stick to it.

C. Family creativity

This is done in only one in ten thousand families. It is a lost art.

I know a family that would often compose music or a poem, act out a story either from the Bible or history, or create their own game.

Most games today cost many dollars, and they entertain the kids a few times and that is it. Make one yourself, and you will enjoy that act of doing it as much as playing it. Now remember that you will not be good at something like this the first time you try it.

Here is an area where time must be spent, but the dividends are with compound interest.

III. Social

A husband and a wife need some social life together, but let your social life as a family be a togetherness as much as you can. This again must be adapted to the needs and desires of the family.

If someone is in a school play, go as a family. You might even stop at the ice cream parlor on the way home.

If a good program is on T.V., watch it together as a family. Then turn it off and enjoy popping popcorn, or making fudge, if your waistline can stand it.

IV. SPIRITUAL

"The Family that Prays Together, Stays Together."

This is the secret of the Christian family over the others. Others may have the first three areas; the Christian family has the fourth. This is togetherness in the Lord and with the Lord. Whatever is done as a family He is included, whether it is reading a book, watching T.V. or going some place. All plans are made with Him in mind.

The Lord is the head of the home. He is the invited guest at every meal. He is the unseen visitor of every conversation.

In the Lord's service, what we do we do together. We do not send our children to Sunday School; we go with them. What is good for them is good for us.

We have a family altar in our home.

Once following a message in a church on having a family altar, the speaker was approached after church by a man in the congregation with a direct question. Concerning a family altar he said: "Where can I buy one?"

You cannot get on at the Christian book store. You must make it yourself, not with wood and nails, but with time, patience and perseverance.

A family altar is not an altar at all in the material sense of the term but is the name that has come to be applied to daily Bible reading and to prayer together as a family. For the younger ones, read Bible stories of which many good books are available for every age group.

Again, this must be tailor-made for your family. It can be after breakfast, or before bed, but it must meet your needs and your schedule. Variety is the key. Keep it simple, keep it short, keep it moving, keep it varied.

Don't make this the time you catch up on your praying, or the time you scold someone.

Your praying together as a family is the key to the success in all other areas, and all other areas are the key to your praying together effectively.

Blessed is the man or woman who can look back over his or her childhood and say: "It was the happiest time of my life, and I thank GOD for my Christian parents."

IF EACH CHRISTIAN FAMILY WERE TO WIN JUST ITS OWN CHILDREN TO THE LORD AND TO THE SERVICE OF CHRIST, THINK OF WHAT THIS WOULD MEAN IN A HUNDRED YEARS, IF THE LORD TARRY

The Church Militant Magazine some years ago compared the descendants of two New England families through several generations. Listen to its comments:

"Anyone who may question the importance of heredity and of the Bible injunction to 'train up a child in the way he should go,' should examine in detail the comparative records of the Edwards and Juke families, two American lines which have been very thoroughly studied.

"About three hundred years ago in New England, Richard Edwards, a well-known lawyer, married Elizabeth Tuttle. Their son, Timothy Edwards, became one of the founders of Yale University. He, in turn, was the father of Jonathon Edwards, the famous colonial preacher and philosopher, who married Sarah Pierpont. All the descendants of this couple have been rounded up and today they include:

- 265 College graduates
- 12 College presidents
- 65 Professors
- 60 Physicians
- 100 Clergymen
- 75 Army officers
- 80 Prominent Authors
- 100 Lawyers
- 30 Judges
- 80 Public officers
- 3 Congressmen
- 2 United States senators
- 1 Vice-President of the United States.

"At about the same time that the noted and godly minister, Jonathon Edwards, was starting this long line of devout as well as illustrious descendants, Max Juke, a New England vagabond, also began to propagate. He married a worldly girl of his own stamp, and the fruit of the family tree turned out to be very sour indeed. At the last count, this couple had 1220 descendants, whose accomplishments were as follows:

- 300 Died in infancy
- 310 Professional paupers
- 440 Crippled by disease
- 50 Prostitutes
- 60 Thieves
- 7 Murderers
- 53 Committed other crimes."

The influence of the home training can not be overemphasized. Daniel Webster gave credit to his parents when he said:

"If there is anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love for the Scriptures."

What America needs today is more God-fearing men like Daniel Webster and Jonathon Edwards. There is only one way we will ever have them -- that is through homes that are truly Christian.

May the Lord be able to say of each one of us even as He did of Abraham: "**For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment**" (Genesis 18:19).

GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR HOME

~ end of book ~