

Bible Lessons



**“Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding
it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be
filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”**

Proverbs 24:3-4

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Quarterly Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

BIBLE LESSONS FOR SECOND QUARTER, 2016

Theme for the Second Quarter “Treasures of a Godly Home”

Home evokes some kind of feeling or memory in us all. For many of us, the feeling is warm and comforting. Unfortunately for some, it is not a pleasant memory. As we look into the Scriptures, we find God’s plan for the home and His design is always one of blessing.

The dynamics of each individual home may vary; to many, home is father, mother and several children. But home may also be a childless couple or a single parent raising children. It may be an older couple living alone whose children are on their own. It may be a blended family, a family caring for elderly parents, a single person living alone—a widow, widower, divorced person, or someone who never married. It could even be several adult siblings living still at home together, like the Bethany home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, whom Jesus loved and often visited. For the purpose of the general discussion, we will primarily be mentioning the father-mother-children home scene.

To each of these different home situations, however, the principles of Scripture apply. The spirit, the atmosphere, and the tone of the home can be one where God’s presence and blessing is known and felt—a heavenly place.

Years ago when we were a family with young children, the Lord visited us with a vision of what it meant to have a true godly home. In the years that have passed since that time, we have endeavored to put that vision into practical daily life. There were times we were discouraged with our progress on the journey toward this goal. But God held the vision ever before us. He gently led us (Isaiah 40:11).

In this series of lessons, we feel inspired to put some of that vision into instructional teaching. It is our prayer that others will catch the vision and be encouraged on their own journey.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

“ . . . He blesseth the habitation of the just.”

Proverbs 3:33

APRIL 3, 2016

VISION FOR A GODLY HOME

Joshua 24:14 Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Psalm 101:2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

Psalm 128:1 Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.

2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. (Also Psalm 112:1-2; Proverbs 20:7).

Isaiah 65:23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. (Also Isaiah 44:2-3 and Isaiah 59:21).

MEMORY VERSE: Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

—Proverbs 24:3-4

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God has pronounced a blessing, upon not only the individual who will fear Him and walk in His ways, but upon his family as well. He desires to dwell in the home of His followers, filling it with holiness, peace, and joy. The home is to be sanctified—set apart for Him and given to His service.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Joshua 24:14 “Fear the Lord”: literally, to dread; be affrighted; morally, to stand in awe of; revere. “Sincerity”: perfection; what is complete; entirely in accord with truth and fact. “Truth”: stability; faithfulness; reliability. “On the other side of the flood”: In Chaldea or Mesopotamia, on the other side of the Euphrates.

15 “If it seem evil”: displeasing, troublesome, afflicting. “As for me and my house”: Not only myself, but my whole household; those living in the home with me. “The Lord”: Jehovah.

Psalm 128:2 “Eat of the labour”: enjoy the comforts and enjoyment of his own industry and honest livelihood, both in a literal and spiritual sense. “Happy”: blessed. “It shall be well”: prosperity; beauty; bounty.

3 “As a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house”: within, or in the inner chambers. It refers to the tenderness of the weaker vessel, who clings to her husband and is a keeper at home. “Olive plants”: olive shoots; the vigorous offsets of an aged olive tree, which spring up around it, ready to take its place.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Joshua's challenge came at the end of his last message to the elders of Israel, who were gathered together after they had entered the land of Canaan and made it their possession. The covenant made that day by the people was commemorated by a stone pillar erected under an oak tree by the sanctuary. Shortly thereafter, Joshua died.

Joshua's declaration states the solemn resolve and purpose each of us should maintain for our homes. "We will serve the Lord." In other scriptures, we read of God's testimony of homes with this purpose and blessing, such as Abraham's household in Genesis 18:19; Zacharias and Elizabeth in Luke 1:5-6; Cornelius in Acts 10:1-2; and the home where Timothy grew up, II Timothy 1:5 and 3:15.

The writer in Psalms gives a beautiful picture of a young man seeking after God, living in conscientious reverence and obedience, and enjoying the blessings of hard work, a devoted wife and happy children round about him.

This psalm is thought to have been a second part to the preceding psalm, and written during the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the captivity.

Isaiah's pronouncement of blessings, not only on an individual, but upon his offspring—his children, grandchildren, and further descendants—actually points forward to the Messiah, who was the "seed" promised to Eve, and His seed, all the born again throughout the ages. Literal Zion was a type of the Church, Christ's bride. The promises to the children of Zion of the peace and blessing through the Holy Spirit can most certainly be applied to marriage and the home, which is a type of Christ's bride as well. Godliness in the home is the greatest legacy one can give to future generations.

The memory verse gives us the key to a godly, harmonious, and joyful home. It is only when the home is established upon wise godly principles that it can endure and be filled with true riches. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1).

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Before Marriage:* Discuss qualities of a godly courtship that will prepare a couple for godliness within the home.
2. *As you Begin:* What goal should a Christian couple establish as they begin their life together? State practical ways a couple can make this a reality in their home.
3. *The Benefits:* What blessings are pronounced upon the home that maintains this resolve?
4. *As a Single:* Express how a single person can bless his/her home with this same consecration.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God truly has laid out in the scriptures a plan for the home. From the beginning He made the man and his wife to be one flesh—a cohesive unit, not to be divided; a little temple of worship and instruction dedicated to Him; an earthly example of His heavenly union with His bride, the church (Gen. 2:24 and Eph. 5:31-32).

How can we really apply this? Starting before marriage is best, with the earnest dedication of our lives to God, to only marry as He wills, and to remember that we—our hearts and our bodies—are to be vessels of honor and holy temples unto him. Praying together, reading and discussing the scriptures together, and creating, just the two of you, a dedication of your marriage and life together unto His will are some very positive ways to do this.

As children enter the home, dedicate them to the Lord and determine to raise them in faith and obedience to His Word. Study how to train them positively. Pray with them and for them. Ask God continually to show you ways to create an atmosphere of worship, joy, and harmony for your children.

Filter your home constantly of things of this world that would promote a different atmosphere than what is your ideal. Ask God to show you how to make all things that you watch, listen to, read, spend time with, love, and put your approval on—“excellent” in His sight.

Most of all, keep your eyes on your goal: a godly home. Don’t be discouraged by failures; use them as stepping stones. Study other godly examples and learn from both positive and not so positive experiences. Make this a lifelong quest.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

May God help us to passionately pursue a godly home environment that will convince and convict our children of the true power of God unto the salvation of their souls. Let's deliberately prevent earthly self-indulgent activities from foiling the purpose of our homes as beacons of light to our children and neighbors, as the following song intimates:

Lord, give us Christian homes!
Homes where the Bible is loved and taught,
Homes where the Master's will is sought,
Homes crowned with beauty Your love has wrought;
Lord, give us Christian homes;
Lord, give us Christian homes!

Lord, give us Christian homes!
Homes where the father is true and strong,
Homes that are free from the weight of wrong,
Homes that are joyous with love and song,
Lord, give us Christian homes;
Lord, give us Christian homes!

Song written by B. B. McKinney

—Bro. Jeremy Booher

APRIL 10, 2016
LOVE IN THE HOME

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

33a Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself;

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Proverbs 5:18 and 19 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth...and be thou ravished always with her love.

Titus 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.

I Corinthians 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

MEMORY VERSE: And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. —I Peter 4:8

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The home is to be, first of all, a place of love. Husbands and wives are to love each other, and parents are to love their children, and all members of the family are to love each other with the self-sacrificing, affectionate, enduring love of Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 5:25 “Love”: to have a preference for; wish well to; regard the welfare of.
29 “Nourisheth”: sustain; nurture. “cherisheth”: to warm; foster; comfort.

Colossians 3:19 “Bitter”: embittered; angry; indignant; harsh; exasperated; irritated.

Proverbs 5:18 “Let thy fountain be blessed”: This is speaking of the wife, also referred to in the previous verses as “thy cistern” and “thy well.” It may either be an admonition: “Let thy wife be blessed with your care and love”; or it pronounces a blessing, as in “May your wife be fruitful and blessed with children.”

I Corinthians 13:4 “Charity”: affection; good will; love; benevolence. “Suffereth long”: have patience; persevere; forbear. “Is kind”: full of service; gentle; acts benevolently; shows mildness.

“Envieth not”: is not moved with jealousy, hatred or anger. “Vaunteth not itself”: does not brag or show off. “Is not puffed up”: is not arrogant, egotistical, inflated with self-importance, or proud.

I Corinthians 13:5 “Doth not behave itself unseemly”: does not act improperly, unbecomingly or indecently. “Seeketh not her own”: does not desire or seek its own praise, honor, profit, or pleasure to the hurt of others. “Is not easily provoked”: from a root meaning a sharp edge; therefore, provoke means to jab; irritate; arouse to anger. “Thinketh no evil”: does not impute, or keep account of, evil; does not remember or meditate upon the evil, but takes a charitable view toward it.

I Corinthians 13:6 “Rejoiceth not in iniquity”: is not glad about injustice, unrighteousness or hurt. “But rejoiceth in the truth”: or with the truth. It rejoices when the truth triumphs, unlike a false “charity” which compromises truth by glossing over iniquity.

I Corinthians 13:7 “Beareth all things”: literally, to cover closely, as with a roof, to keep water out; to bear up under; to endure patiently. “The charitable man contains himself in silence from giving vent to what selfishness would prompt under personal hardship.” — *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*. “Believeth all things”: to have faith or confidence in. “Takes the best and kindest views of all men and all circumstances, as long as it is possible to do so.” — *Pulpit Commentary*. “Hopeth all things”: expects; trusts. The opposite to gloom, it hopes when others have lost hope. “Endureth all things”: to remain under the load; bear up against; persevere; have fortitude.

I Peter 4:8 “Fervent”: deep; intense; earnest; constant. “For charity shall cover a multitude of sins”: having the love of Christ that forgives sins. Refers to Proverbs 10:12. “Puts the best constructions upon the words and actions of fellow Christians, and does not take them up, and improve and exaggerate them, but lets them lie buried in oblivion: it takes no notice of injuries, offences, and affronts, but overlooks them, bears with them, and forgives them, so that they are never raked up, and seen any more; which prevents much scandal, strife, and trouble.” — *Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The context of Paul’s admonitions to husbands and wives in the book of Ephesians is the analogy he is drawing between Christ and the church and marriage. When we have a good understanding of that relationship—of Christ’s sacrificial love and the corresponding obedience and reverence of His beloved—we then can have a better understanding of the kind of love we should have toward each other in the home.

In the letter to the Corinthians, the qualities of this kind of love are given in great detail. We get a clear, composite picture of the many facets of love and its practical workings in everyday life, and the resulting peace and harmony in the home.

Marriage is God’s institution; it is His design. He gave the supreme example of it in the sacrifice of His Son and in His love for the church; it is this example that we should earnestly strive for and emulate.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *The Perfect Example*: Describe the kind of love that Christ manifested. How may a husband show this in real life?

2. *The Willing Response*: What kind of response does this sacrificial love invoke in the wife? How does this reveal itself in everyday living?
3. *A necessary admonition*: According to Titus 2, the older women are to teach the younger women to love their husbands and children. Why is this necessary? Is this something that will just happen naturally?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

"Here's a picture of love gleaned from real-life examples: Love is a man always putting the comfort, pleasure and happiness of his wife ahead of his own. Love is a wife thinking constantly of her husband's needs and desires and putting forth the strength and time of her whole day to meet those needs—without always being asked. Love is a son who lays aside his wants and dreams in life to assist and be a blessing to his father who is not well. Love is a daughter being a best friend to her mother—sharing with her, helping her, praising her, encouraging her. Love is a mother staying up all night to be beside a sick child, praying, getting drinks, cleaning up sick messes. Love is a wife taking the Biblical steps to forgive and restore the erring husband and never broadcasting the story of his weakness to others. Love is a grandmother lying on the floor beside the bed of her granddaughter who has shingles, praying all times of the night until God takes all pain and itching away completely. Love is a husband who cleans up the kitchen for his sick wife—after working twelve hours on his own job. Love is a dad who is dead tired after a hard day, reading stories to his toddlers."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

"For God so loved, that he gave. . . ." Giving is a reflection of the love that God has put down in our hearts. Many of my fondest childhood memories wrap around my Grandma, whom I dearly miss. Her home always meant warmth, acceptance, stability. I loved staying at Grandpa and Grandma's, although the snoring would often hinder me from getting to sleep.

I remember the many times she held me in her bosom and rocked me to sleep in the wooden rocking chair. I remember the beautiful colored chicks she would buy in early spring and keep in a cardboard box by the stove until they got a little larger. She always seemed available to take me and stay for my school activities and afterwards we would go eat. I also remember the wheat harvests, riding with Grandpa on the combine or with Grandma in the truck in the hot summer sun.

I went with her on many trips to visit her sisters, brothers and family. There were also all the times she loaded me and a lawnmower in the truck to help her on rental houses. She would single-handedly load up us cousins and haul us off to camp-meeting, stopping by a fruit stand on the way.

I don't remember her giving extraordinarily; it was just the ordinary, everyday stuff that counted. She was there. I remember her often calling me from her back porch—"Bobby, supper is ready". I could smell the fried chicken as I raced to the back door and I knew that mashed potatoes and gravy went with it!

—Bro. Bob Wilson

APRIL 17, 2016
MUTUAL HONOR IN THE HOME

Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

I Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. (Also Proverbs 11:16 and 12:4)

Leviticus 19:32 Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord.

Ephesians 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. (Also Exodus 20:12.)

I Timothy 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

MEMORY VERSE: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. —I Thessalonians 4:4

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The home is to be a place where honor is given. God is revered as the head of the man; the husband and father is honored as the head of the home and one who gives himself for his wife; the wife and mother is honored as the virtuous crown of her husband and guide of the house; the widowed and the elderly are to be revered, and the estate of marriage is to be reverently regarded as a holy bond.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 5:33 “Reverence”: to venerate; to treat with deference or reverential obedience.

I Peter 3:7 “According to knowledge”: with wisdom, understanding and consideration. “Honour”: value; worth. “Heirs together of the grace of life”: fellow heirs of the gracious gift of physical and spiritual (eternal) life.

Leviticus 19:32 “Rise up before the hoary head”: stand up (as an expression of honor) in the presence of an aged (gray-haired) person.

I Timothy 5:3 “Honour”: literally, to price; to fix the value. In this word *honor* is included the material support, or payment for their maintenance that their condition of widowhood required. “Widows indeed”: those who are really desolate and alone.

I Timothy 5:4 “Nephews”: a descendant; grandchild. “Shew piety at home”: to be dutiful; show homage or respect; give support; to practice godliness toward one’s own parents. “Requite their parents”: recompense; to give back the return or exchange due. “[Those who

had] nourished and cared for them in their childhood—they must requite that care by honoring and supporting them in their old age.” —*Pulpit Commentary*

Hebrews 13:4 “Honourable”: Understood by some as an exhortation—let marriage be held in honor by all. “And the bed undefiled”: also an exhortation—let the bed be undefiled.

I Thessalonians 4:4 “Possess his vessel”: to know, by moral self-control, how to obtain mastery over [his vessel] in a becoming, chaste way. Vessel can refer to either a man’s own body, or his wife; both were called by the Jews by this name. “In sanctification and honor”: in a holy and honorable way.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul gives the comparison of the institution of marriage to the union of Christ with his bride, the church. As the church submits to and honors Christ, so the wife honors, reveres and submits to her husband.

Peter also speaks specifically to husbands and wives in I Peter 3. After outlining the principle of godly submission of wives to their husbands, he shows the balance in God’s plan by commanding the husbands to use good judgment, self-control and understanding when dealing with their wives, giving them honor and courtesy. The practice—or neglect—of this important principle, Peter says, has directly to do with how effectual a man’s prayers will be.

Paul also admonishes the men of Thessalonica to use self-control, holiness and honor in their relationships with their wives.

Specific commands were given in the Old Testament law concerning honor shown to parents. The elderly were especially to be shown honor and esteem. They were to never be neglected or despised—a command so important that Solomon emphasized it in the book of Proverbs. (Chapter 23:22).

This reverence for the aged and the widow was also taught and carried out by the early New Testament church. Children and grandchildren were to make sure that they cared for their aged or desolate parents—practicing true godliness at home.

These Scriptures give a clear picture of the atmosphere or attitude of mutual honor that God wants in the home, and is the underlying secret of the obedience God requires of a wife to her husband and children to their parents. It sets in place a structure of honor in the family, each component building upon the foundation of honor and worship to God; then a man toward his wife; a wife toward her husband; children to their parents; and adult children toward aged or widowed parents or grandparents.

Indeed, according to the Scriptures, the whole plan of marriage—the bond of matrimony—is to be held in great esteem and sacred honor.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *What Motivates:* What attitude will give motivation to the duties of submission, obedience, care, and courtesy in the home?
2. *In Comparison:* To whom is the husband compared, in his role as the head? To what is the wife likened to, in her role? Discuss the important characteristics of each.

3. *A Delicate Balance*: Because sometimes either a husband or wife's component is missing or neglected, there is often a resulting misuse of power and/or rebellion in the home. Show the proper balance reflected in the Scriptures.
4. *Marriage is Honorable*: How do we demonstrate this?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

As these Scriptures began to fit together into a lesson, I have been amazed at the handiwork of God in His divinely-built institution called home! See how it compares to a body—which is also fearfully and wonderfully made—and to the church, which is HIS body? There are so many intricate, individual workings, each of them important to the whole structure.

As we look out into the world, we can see what is missing in many homes: the honor. When honor is lacking, the carrying out of the little duties of care and courtesy are missing, creating a huge void in the lives of men, women, boys and girls.

God is calling us to virtue, holiness and honor, WITHIN OUR HOMES. Can we hear and heed this challenge and be people who demonstrate these principles on a daily basis in our lives? In our words—may they be gracious and honoring to each other. In our actions—let us yield respectfully to and dedicate ourselves to serve the needs of each family member. In our attitudes—what we breathe out, what we ARE—God help us to have genuine regard and esteem for our parents, spouse, children; and value highly and invoke the presence of God in our homes.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

Our lesson brings back so many wonderful memories to my mind, when as a father I would come home from work. My wife made a special effort to teach our children to show me honor and come running to greet me. "There's daddy!! He's coming!! He's HOME!!" It makes me smile inside just to think of the warm, joyful welcome I got when I walked in the door, and they started grabbing my legs and hugging me. The most precious memories I have as a father are because my wife honored me so much and exemplified it at my arrival. The hot rolls in the oven or some other delicious aroma of the food being prepared for our dinner also made me glad to be the man of this home. I was glad to open a jar for her, take the trash out, or do whatever I needed to do to be a part of this haven. To be home with my family and the honor they showed me made the hardest jobs worth it.

I remember as an air-conditioning/heating serviceman I had many difficult jobs to do. One morning it was icy cold outside and I had to crawl under an old house with a crawl space very low to the ground. As I was removing my coat so I could fit under that dirty house I stopped, put my coat back on, and said in my mind, "I'm not going under there with all those spiders, mice, snakes and who knows what other creatures living under there. I'll just tell them it's not worth fixing." I picked up my tools and started to leave; then I thought about my family and it made me take my coat off and crawl under that old house and give it my best.

My father honored his family by working two and three jobs for years to keep his family comfortable. I count it an honor to do the same for mine. When *honor* is working between husband and wife and children, there is a picture of a happy, joyful home.

--Bro. James Bell

APRIL 24, 2016
SUBMISSION IN THE HOME

I Corinthians 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

I Peter 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: Whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

—Ephesians 5:21

CENTRAL THOUGHT: As Christ in His human nature submitted Himself unto God, so the man is in submission to Christ, the wife submits herself to her husband, and the children are to be in submission to their parents.

WORD DEFINITIONS

I Corinthians 11:3 “Head”: lord; ruler; a cornerstone, uniting two walls. Anything supreme; chief; prominent. “The head of Christ is God”: not as to his Divine nature, for in that they are equal and of the same essence; but as touching His human nature and his capacity as Mediator, Christ prayed to God the Father, yielded to Him, and obeyed Him even unto death.

Ephesians 5:21, 22 and 24; I Peter 3:1 and 5 “Submitting; submit; is subject; subjection;” (also Titus 2:5 “Obedient”): I place myself under; to subject to. “Properly, under God’s arrangement, i.e. submitting to the Lord (His plan)” —*Helps Word Studies*

23 “Savior”: deliverer; preserver.

I Peter 3:1 “Conversation”: conduct; behavior; manner of life

2 “Chaste”: free from defilement; pure. “Fear”: reverence for authority, rank or dignity.

6 “Amazement”: terror; dismay; nervous excitement. These verses teach the vital element of trust in God in the matter of submission.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul wrote to the Corinthians many admonitions concerning private and public worship and the proper deportment and conduct of worshipers; he also dealt with matters of the relationship between husbands and wives. The verse from the eleventh chapter describes the divine order that has been in place since the creation of man and the institution of the home. Our focus today is on the concept of the man’s submission to Christ and the wife being subject to her husband.

The rest of our lesson contains Paul’s further teachings of a wife’s submission to her husband, his manner toward her as not only head, but savior—deliverer and preserver—and the obedience God commands for children to give to their parents.

Peter wrote teachings along this line also. He instructs both wives and husbands to treat each other with much honor and respect, citing Old Testament example women of holiness, especially Sarah and her husband Abraham.

The memory verse gives an important secret for all relationships, especially in the family: mutual submission and yielding to the needs, desires, and requests of each other. This is the attitude that brings peace and harmony within the home.

--Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *The Head of Every Man*: When a man is living with Christ as his head, how will that affect his attitudes, actions, and words toward his wife?
2. *The Head of the Woman*: Modern women in general have rebelled against this vital teaching. How will obedience to this principle affect a wife in her attitudes, actions, and words toward her husband?
3. *Chain of Command*: Explain how the failure of a husband and father to submit to Christ, and the failure of a wife and mother to submit to her husband will negatively affect the children, who should be brought into submission and obedience as well.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Submission is truly a wonderful treasure of the godly home. Sadly, it has been misunderstood, disregarded, misused, and abused by many people.

The wicked abuse of women in the name of godly authority is truly appalling; the consequence is that women then justify rebellion and have turned away from godliness and Christianity in disgust. A further ripple effect is that the children are also left to rebellion.

Certainly the Lord intended that the husband's obedience to Him, and his heart's consent to lay down his life for his wife, put down his own selfish desires, and nourish, cherish and honor his wife, would create the atmosphere of submission in his home, making it a joy for his wife to reverence him, and providing positive motivation for the children to follow as well.

The beauty in these Scriptures is that the heart, not just outward control, is involved. Note the very words (as referenced in Word Definitions): subject, submit, submitting, obedient—have to do with a voluntary heart surrender. "I place myself under." When this is in the heart, there may be difficulties, there will most certainly be times of battle where one must pray through to victory; but the heart's consent is already won. The Lord won. It is unto Him. It is in faith. It is trusting Him to work things out when I feel I am submitting blindly, and maybe to my hurt.

Remember that a godly home is our goal. Mutual submission is one of the vital elements of that goal.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

The spirit of submission is obviously something that can be practiced by each member of the family. This creates a happy and harmonious home. While meditating on this subject, it seems that there are a few key ingredients that can be helpful in bolstering this kind of environment:

The Importance of Prayer: "The family that prays together stays together." While praying individually is a necessary part of our personal devotion to the Lord, it is also needful to pray collectively as a family. Praying together is a wonderful time to learn how to bring our needs to the Lord, as well as thanking him for all that he has done in our lives. This is something that can be practiced by each member of the family; it should not always be left up to the parents to do. I have heard some sweet prayers from the mouths of little children, as they have an innocent and pure faith.

The Power of Repentance: "I'm sorry." While the Lord has placed parents to be the authority over their children, it does not mean that there will be no mistakes made. Just as no child is perfect - no parent is perfect either. When the father or mother makes an incorrect call of decision, judgment or discipline, it is completely okay to say, "I'm sorry". This also works well with the husband and wife to each other and children to their parents or siblings. Repentance practiced by each member of the family goes a long way toward building a consistent and strong relationship.

The Necessity of Service: "Each for the other and all for the Lord." No matter what position you hold in the family, remember to serve one another well. Acts of courtesy and a good dose of manners should be commonly exercised between each other. Words of derision, sarcasm or harmful teasing should cease. Look for ways to make life easier for one another. A helping hand with an unsavory chore, a sweet note in a lunch bag or a favorite dish prepared with love - all of these expressions of service lead to a healthy and happy home environment.

Building a strong and harmonious family unit is no small task. It takes a lot of time and humility. It is not for the slothful or the faint hearted, but the benefits are reaped from time to eternity. May you too enjoy the benefits of a "home sweet home."

--Sis. LaDawna Adams

MAY 1, 2016
KINDNESS AND COURTESY IN THE HOME

Proverbs 31:26 She [the virtuous woman] openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

Ecclesiastes 10:12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Colossians 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

I Peter 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

MEMORY VERSE: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. —Galatians 5:22-23

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The wise man and the virtuous woman both make graciousness and kindness the law of their conduct. Courtesy, gentleness, compassion, and forgiveness are qualities that should be practiced in every godly home.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Proverbs 31:26 "Wisdom": skill; prudence and sound sense. "Law of kindness": instruction in kindness; loving instruction.

Ecclesiastes 10:12 "Gracious": favor; grace; pleasantness.

Romans 12:10 "Kindly affectioned": tenderly loving; devoted love; that special love shared between members of God's family. This is the only occurrence of this word in Scripture. "In honour preferring one another": in showing honor, outdoing one another; to go before; set an example to one another, not waiting until respect is shown on one side to return it again.

Ephesians 4:32 “Tenderhearted”: merciful; compassionate. “

Colossians 3:12 “Bowels”: the inward parts; affections; seat of the feelings; the capacity to feel deep emotions. “Mercies”: pity; compassions; deep feeling about someone’s difficulty or misfortune. “Kindness”: derived from a word meaning useful; profitable. “Divine kindness; the Spirit-produced goodness which meets the need and avoids human harshness (cruelty).”—*HELPS Word Studies*. “Humbleness of mind”: humility; modesty; having an humble opinion of oneself; a deep sense of one’s moral littleness. “Meekness”: gentleness; mildness; temperate, displaying the right blend of force and reserve (gentleness). “Strength in gentleness. Avoids unnecessary harshness, yet without compromising or being too slow to use necessary force.”—*HELPS Word Studies*. “Longsuffering”: patience; divinely regulated forbearance; being long-tempered.

13 “Forbearing one another”: endure; bear up; show tolerance. “Forgiving one another”: give freely; show favor; forgive; pardon; show kindness. “Quarrel”: blame; fault; to have a matter of complaint.

1 Peter 3:8 “Be ye all of one mind”: agreeing; of one mind, intent, or purpose; divinely-inspired harmony; having the same perspective. “Having compassion one of another”: sympathetic; suffering or feeling the like with another. “Love as brethren”: referring to the affectionate love between fellow family members. “Pitiful”: tenderhearted; compassionate. “Courteous”: the mind-set of love which is quick to show friendly, courteous behavior. One version renders this instead, “modest and humble”, while another has “kind and meek”. “It differs slightly from “humble,” in that it refers to a conscious effort to be truly humble.”—*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*.

9 “Evil”: inner malice. “Railing”: abuse; reproach; insult.

10 “Guile”: deceit; treachery; exploitation of the naïve and undiscerning.

11 “Eschew”: turn away from; fully avoid by deliberate, decisive rejection. “Ensnare”: earnestly pursue.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The virtuous woman who speaks to her family and instructs them with wisdom and kindness was being described in Proverbs 31 by a mother’s instructions to King Lemuel, who was either Solomon, as some scholars presume, or possibly Hezekiah. Others say the chapter is a continuation of the prophecy of Agur, from the preceding chapter. However that may be, these verses, written as a Hebrew acrostic, each verse beginning with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, describe the character of a woman of genuine worth. Verse 26 gives one of the most beautiful features of the portrait being drawn of the virtuous woman: her loving, wise instruction given in a most gentle way.

A portrait is also drawn in Proverbs and in Ecclesiastes—which was very likely a public warning by Solomon, a publishing of his repentance—of a wise man. His business dealings, his honor, his authority, his humility, his faithfulness and diligence, his integrity—and very often, the wisdom and graciousness of his speech—are depicted as an example for the godly man to follow.

The twelfth chapter of Romans is a practical list of Christian duties. It follows the doctrinal teachings of the Gospel—how it related to both Jews and Gentiles—that were given in the first eleven chapters. Beginning with the entreaty for the believer to present his body wholly and

completely to God in total surrender, Paul then gives instructions as to the mindset and conduct of a holy life. The affection he describes in verse 10 not only speaks of a tenderness, but a *delight* in feeling it.

Paul also wrote in his epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians and Colossians similar admonitions that may be applied not only to life together as saints of God, members together of one body, but also most certainly to members of a family dwelling together at home.

Peter, following specific instructions for a man and wife in the third chapter, sums up the admonition with counsel that would benefit all: fellow members of a congregation of believers, brothers and sisters in a family, extended family members, and without doubt, a husband and his wife. What a beautiful picture is painted of the circle of love—the selfless sharing, the mutual benefit, and the fellowship and comfort of that circle!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Essentials*: The teachings and instructions of a mother should always be given with what two important ingredients?
2. *Truly Wise*: Compare Eccles. 10:12 with James 3:13. What common characteristic of wisdom do these Scriptures portray?
3. *Checklist*: Name the heart qualities outlined in the verses from Romans, Galatians, Ephesians and I Peter.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I must honestly tell you that when I finished compiling these Scriptures and their definitions, I was convicted in my own heart and could not stop weeping for over an hour! I could see where there were times in raising my family that I had been sadly lacking in these areas.

Oh, the pain and sorrow we would avoid if we could keep these essential qualities in our hearts and manifest them to our families! “Thy gentleness has made me great,” David said, meaning, “You have made me to grow, abound and flourish by your gentle way of dealing with me.” Surely, that is how we can nurture our little ones and encourage our spouse to greatness—by that true compassion and deep sympathetic feeling that expresses itself in gentleness and kindness.

The little niceties that we often extend only to newcomers—may we keep them for home folks, too! We can soften requests by the simple word, “Please.” We can cultivate appreciation by always saying, “Thank you. I appreciate that.” We can look our loved ones in the eyes, and smile when we first see them in the morning, or when they come in during the day. A gentle caress, a warm hug, or an “I love you,” given sincerely, can brighten someone’s whole day.

Kindness truly is a simple way to make the home a heavenly place.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

A compelling, relevant, and heart-capturing picture is drawn in Nehemiah 9. God *payed attention* to His children. He *talked* and *listened* to them, He *taught* them, *led* them, *fed* them, and *forbore* with them. Ultimately, He showed them *multiple mercies with great kindness* when they selfishly went their own way. Kindness takes time and effort and shines most brilliantly in situations where mercy must also be shown!

A cardinal rule of a company for which my husband and I used to work was this: Always answer the phone with a smile. It became a *cultivated habit* to portray a smile to potential customers whose business we coveted -- regardless of our feelings. Our feelings should not be dictators of our actions. Rude, indifferent, or harsh words spoken because we are tired, had a long day, or are fighting our own inward battles come with a high price tag. The childhood saying that "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me," is simply not true.

Familiarity with the faults and/or weaknesses of our family members, whom we know best, should not be a reason to excuse a lack of kindness or good manners! Let us humbly ask forgiveness when we fail and prayerfully strive, by the grace of God, to cultivate the same kindness and courtesy in our lives which God has extended to us!

--Sis. Julie Elwell

MAY 8, 2016

WORSHIP AND GODLY INSTRUCTION IN THE HOME

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Psalm 78:4 We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

6 That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:

7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

Isaiah 38:19b The father to the children shall make known thy truth.

MEMORY VERSE: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your

hearts to the Lord. 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 3:16-17

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Scriptures teach that the home is to be a place of praise and worship to God and instruction in His ways.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord”: Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah.

Psalm 78:5 “Testimony”: witness; the code of the Law, in general.

Colossians 3:16 “Teaching”: to cause to learn; to impart knowledge. It nearly always refers to teaching the Scriptures. “Admonishing”: to appeal to the mind; “To reason with someone by warning, supplying doctrinal and spiritual substance.” —*Helps Word Studies*

LESSON BACKGROUND

Moses’ message to the children of Israel contained the guidelines for their life in Canaan. God wanted His character, His will, His law, His covenants and the acts and events of the mighty deliverance He had given them to be passed down to the following generations; this was to be done in the home, by the parents. There were memorials, feasts, and ceremonies that were to be explained in detail to the children when they asked for the meaning. The home was to be kept clean of any influences of the false gods around them (Deuteronomy 7:26). The children were to be taught to pray to, sing to, and to explain the worship of the true God.

Examples of how this was carried out can be found all through the Old and New Testaments. Isaac was most certainly familiar with all the worship of God, of which knowledge he testified to by being willing to sacrifice himself. God had also personally testified of Abraham’s diligent command of his household. Joseph knew the will and requirements of God and adhered to them even when far away in Egypt. Samuel was diligently trained by Hannah to obey implicitly and serve faithfully, as a very young child. David had obviously been taught the beauty and wonder of the law of God. The captive maiden “missionary” to Naaman’s household had been thoroughly educated in the worship of the true God. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and Daniel were all very young men, yet knew exactly what God required of them when they were tempted with an alternative in Babylon captivity. Jesus’ mother Mary and his earthly father Joseph faithfully schooled Jesus in the law, the Psalms and the Prophets, until, at age 12, he could converse astonishingly with the temple elders. Timothy had been taught the Scriptures as a child through his mother and grandmother.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Take Every Opportunity:* At what times of the day were parents instructed to teach God’s law to their children?
2. *A Heart for the Next Generation:* What are we to “show forth” to the generation to come?

3. *A Home Filled with Praise*: Explain how godly music and singing can “bring to life” the Biblical teachings in the home.
4. *Of Vital Importance*: How important is family prayer and worship, Bible teaching and godly music to the life of the home?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The importance of daily worship and diligent instruction cannot be overemphasized. It starts with the parents in the home loving and following God’s Word in their own lives, and being an example of the truths they teach. It has been said, “More is caught than taught.”

The secret to successful teaching is right there in Deuteronomy. As we live, we teach. We don’t wait for a formal setting, although that has its place. It is done as we wake in the morning, at mealtime, as we take a trip, a walk, or a ride to the store. It is accomplished as we work, as “teachable” moments arise, all through the day, and at bedtime.

It is important to talk, really talk to each other, as a family. It is vital that we share our family history—that we take the time to explain about people who lived for the Lord successfully and those who did not, and the rewards or consequences of both. Biographies of important people, especially notable Christians, missionaries, and martyrs are very influential reading for the family circle.

I cannot express the value that singing together has in a family. Not only can the simple rudiments of music be learned in the close parent/child setting, but the truths of the songs can be explained as well. Singing together promotes family unity and makes precious memories.

Yes, it is possible to establish the WORSHIP of God in your home. Keep God’s presence near at all times by constantly calling, freely and naturally, on God in times of need; praising Him and practicing an “attitude of gratitude” for all things, and eliminating worldly distractions and ungodly media that constantly vie for our attention.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

May our children witness in us, and our homes, the attitudes and drives consistently motivated by the love of God and his holiness. Two more verses of a song I mentioned in an earlier lesson expresses the reverential sentiments of good Christian homes:

Lord, give us Christian homes!
Homes where the mother in queenly quest,
Strives to show others thy way is best,
Homes where the Lord is an honored guest;
Lord, give us Christian homes;
Lord, give us Christian homes!

Lord, give us Christian homes!
Homes where the Children are taught to know,
Christ in His beauty who loves them soon,

Homes where the altar fires burn and glow,
Lord, give us Christian homes;
Lord, give us Christian homes!

Song written by B.B.McKinney

—Bro. Jeremy Booher

MAY 15, 2016

JOY IN THE HOME

Ecclesiastes 8:1b A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.

Ecclesiastes 9:9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. (Also Proverbs 5:18)

Psalm 113:9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.

Psalm 127:3 Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128:1 Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.

2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

MEMORY VERSE: Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. --Psalm 16:11

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God's plan for the home is that there would be joy and happiness within. The husband and wife would have joy in each other; they would be joyful as parents of children; and the very presence of God in the home would be the source of that joy.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ecclesiastes 8:1 "The boldness of his face shall be changed": some scholars feel the word *boldness*, which means *strong*, has a negative connotation--*impudence* or *harshness* or *sternness*, so as to suggest, "A man's wisdom illumines him and causes his stern face to beam."—*New American Standard Bible*. Others read it, "The wisdom of a man shall illuminate his face; and the strength of his countenance shall be doubled," meaning, "He shall speak with full confidence and conviction." Wisdom will do both; bring softness and graciousness into a stern face, *and* give more confidence and strength to a man's convictions.

9:9 “Live joyfully”: the gladness of heart that springs from a sense of the Divine favor. (Proverbs 17:22)—*Matthew Henry*. “All the days of the life of thy vanity”: Not for just a short while, but faithfully through all of life, which itself is brief and fleeting.

Psalms 113:9 “Joyful”: glad; merry-hearted; rejoicing.

127:3 “Heritage”: possession; portion; share; inheritance.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today’s lesson again portrays the happiness of the wise man who seeks God and trusts in the Lord. In other lessons we see that he gives himself for his wife as her preserver and defender, he loves her as his own self, and his words to her are gracious and kind. Here, a wise man’s wisdom makes his countenance and bearing luminous and cheerful, changed from being harsh and stern; he lives joyfully with his wife and family.

Likewise, a godly wife and mother is pictured with the quality of joy added to the qualities of meekness, submission, reverence, wisdom and kindness, which we studied previously.

Although God’s commands and standards were strict and firm against evil and false gods, the religion of Jehovah was a joyful one. Singing and praise has accompanied the worship of God down through the ages. David portrayed the godly being a people of joy; all through the day and even upon their beds, the joyful praises of God were to be heard in their homes. When the law was rediscovered and read to the people in Ezra’s day, he encouraged them not to sorrow about it, but to rejoice, adding that “the joy of the Lord” was their strength.

In the New Testament, Jesus told His disciples that His Word was given to them that their joy might be full. Singing, praise and rejoicing was the outward expression of hearts filled with living water out of the wells of salvation.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *The Secret*: What gives strength for the many tasks involved in maintaining a godly home?
2. *The Source*: According to our memory verse, what is the source of joy in our hearts, in our homes, and in the congregation?
3. *The Daily Living*: Share practical suggestions for how joy can be implemented into day to day life in the home.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The little-known, underrated secret to the success of the home is joy. Many times we diligently plod along, faithful to the “duties,” obedient to all the “standards,” embracing the form of righteousness, but lacking in this essential component. Yet joy is the one thing which can make all the difference.

We’re not talking about a surface happiness. “Everybody look happy, now—people are watching us.” The Scriptures speak of daily living, of inner qualities. It’s not that we let go of the standards and dismiss the boundaries; but, true joy is the motivation for those high standards, giving ease and energy for their application.

Let us not overlook the importance of good, wholesome laughter and fun in a family. Family trips, birthdays, games, meals, worship times—all are times where we can secure the loyalty of our children by giving them warm memories of all the fun they had at home.

Joy is a choice. Joy is deliberate. We can present the rules of the home with a sour face or a cheerful one. Chores and jobs can be coerced at the constant threat of punishment or transformed into fun and games. God is our source; He can give us creative ideas for how to incorporate joy into our daily lives.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

In visiting many different homes over the years, you can pretty much sum up the environments of the home into three categories: the toxic home, the refrigerator home and the cozy home.

The Toxic Home: Once you enter the toxic home, you automatically feel the stress and hostility of the family unit. Words spoken are laced with anger and sarcasm. Members of the home, as well as visiting friends, do not feel cherished or loved in this environment. Sadly, there is a lot of emotional damage in this type of home.

The Refrigerator Home: Loving words, actions, or deeds are sparse or non-existent in the refrigerator home. Parents are demanding or domineering with lots of rules and no positive relationships. Children cannot wait to become of age so they can flee this cold environment, and rarely do they return; there is just simply no warmth to draw them back.

The Cozy Home: The minute you walk through the door of a cozy home, the members of the family make you feel cherished, wanted and loved. It is as though the host or hostess has "rolled out the red carpet" just for you. Conversation flows easily and the memories made will last a lifetime. The children of the cozy home grow up and leave this happy place to build their own nests, but they will always love migrating back. A joyful and happy family is a little piece of heaven on this side. These are the heart ties that keep the members of the family, as well as visiting friends, returning again and again.

So what kind of home do you have?

--Sis. LaDawna Adams

MAY 22, 2016

PEACE IN THE HOME

Genesis 13:8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee. . . for we be brethren.

Proverbs 13:10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.
(Also James 4:1)

15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. (Also 25:15)

18:18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty. (Also 15:18 and Eccles. 10:4)

26:20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Isaiah 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Romans 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

II Timothy 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. —James 3:17-18

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The wise man or woman who is a peacemaker is blessed by God, and the Scriptures give clear explanations as to what causes strife, and what creates peace.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Genesis 13:8 “Strife”: quarrel; provocation; contention.

Proverbs 13:10 “Pride”: insolence; arrogance; presumptuousness.

“Contention”: quarrel; debate; strife.

15:1 “Grievous words”: words that cause pain and hurt.

18:18 “Lot”: the casting of lots; in today’s language, flipping a coin.

Romans 14:19 “Edify”: The act of building up; bring about spiritual advancement.

Philippians 2:3 “Strife”: Rivalry; ambition.

II Timothy 2:24 “Strive”: fight; contend; dispute. “Gentle”: placid; mild; refers to calming words.

Hebrews 12:14 “Peace”: oneness; wholeness; quietness; rest

LESSON BACKGROUND

The first verse of our lesson is from the story of Abram and his nephew, Lot. Both men had amassed enormous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, until the herdsmen who tended them began to quarrel with each other over the land. The strife was settled by Abram, who graciously gave Lot first choice of land while he took what was left.

The verses from Proverbs give various reasons and causes of strife and contention: pride, grievous words, and tale-bearing. Other verses in Proverbs speak of a contentious man or a

contentious woman and how difficult they are to live with in the home. Many verses in Proverbs deal with the power of the tongue to wound or to heal, to curse or to bless, to kill or give life.

Answers to the problem of strife are given as well. In Biblical times, a common and successful practice was that of casting lots to settle disputes. When done honestly, a neutral object was the deciding factor, both parties understanding that God had His way in the choosing of the lot. Strife is also turned into peace by yielding one's own selfish way to another, speaking quietly and gently in volatile situations, and refusing to share negative stories about another person.

Isaiah points forward to the righteousness of Christ in a person as a means of bringing about quietness and peace in his or her life. Jesus let us know how to recognize a genuine child of God: when someone is a peacemaker. Other New Testament scriptures admonish us to follow and pursue peace, making every effort to live in peace with each other. Clearly, strife, self-seeking pride, and evil speaking are forbidden to the child of God, while gentleness, patience, humility, honesty—important ways to build each other up—are enjoined.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *What Prompts:* According to Genesis 13:8, Proverbs 13:10 and James 4:1, what are the primary causes of strife?
2. *What Promotes Peace:* What characteristics and actions of the wise man or the virtuous woman bring peace to the home?
3. *What Changes:* Describe what the righteousness of Christ does in the heart and its effect in the home.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We can all look back and see where we could have done better in our home life. If I could do things over, I would implement the simple “casting of lots” principle more in settling disputes between my children. Another simple change I would make that I know would make for peace is just setting bedtime at an earlier hour. A tired household can also be an irritable one. I could also have saved some trouble by following this tip from a pastor: When dividing portions between children, have one child do the dividing and the other child do the choosing. This simple method brings positive pressure upon the child doing the dividing to be very honest and careful, which influences the other child to be fair as well.

I'm amazed at the answers we find in Scripture for these very common, everyday problems. Wisdom's principles will work. The basis for true wisdom is true selflessness. And the secret to that is the righteousness that comes only from Christ, the Prince of Peace. He imparts the powerful grace of meekness to a strong man who loves to always be right. He gives the quiet and gentle spirit to a woman who would be by nature very contentious. Living by these principles will bring peace between individuals who would naturally not get along. Let us seek every day for this “amazing” grace and make every effort to live in peace with one another.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

A peaceful home is a quiet, healing, restful little sanctuary from toil and trouble and should be the object of our prayers and endeavors.

I remember reading a testimony of a lady who said that after thirty-some years of marriage, she finally came to the realization that nagging never helped improve her marriage. She was also amazed at the changes that came to her husband's life when she stopped. Oh, that we all could come to the realization of how ineffective nagging, complaining, murmuring, contention, and disrespect are in the home. They are the enemies of a peaceful home.

I've seen husbands and wives negatively belittle one another over and over, year after year—STOP IT! Does it ever help? Does it make changes for the better? Why continue on down that dead-end road?

We have all fallen prey to these negative carnal traits at one time or another, but let us not allow them to become a calloused habit or pattern in our lives. "The axe is laid to the root of the tree;" thank the Lord, there is victory over past hurts, power grabs and manipulative tendencies. A peaceful home can be ours.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

MAY 29, 2016

ORDER AND DISCIPLINE IN THE HOME

Genesis 18:19a For I know him [Abraham], 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;

I Samuel 3:13 For I have told him [Eli] that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

I Kings 1:6a And his [Adonijah's] father [David] had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

31:27 She [the virtuous woman] looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

I Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre: but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

5:14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

MEMORY VERSE: Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.—Proverbs 22:6

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Order and discipline are treasures in a godly home. God is a God of order, not chaos. His Word teaches that parents are to bring their children into subjection wisely, without discouraging or angering them, but nurturing them and bringing them to Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Proverbs 29:15 “Rod”: staff used for chastisement. “Reproof”: correction; rebuke; reasoning. “A child left to himself”: to wander free as he wills. The same word is used referring to the wild ass in Job 39:5.

31:27 “She looketh well”: to keep watch; to lean forward and peer into the distance; observe; spy. “She eateth not the bread of idleness”: or sluggishness and indolence. Rather, she eats bread won by active labor and conscientious diligence.

Ephesians 6:4 “Provoke. . .to wrath”: exasperate; rouse to anger. “Nurture”: the training and education of children, which includes cultivation of mind and morals, increase of virtues, and development to full maturity. “Admonition”: warning; exhortation; counsel.

I Timothy 3:2 “Apt to teach”: able and skillful in teaching *and* having the virtue which renders one teachable; docile.

3 “Striker”: a bully; ready with a blow; quarrelsome; contentious. “Not a brawler”: peaceable, abstaining from fighting, not contentious.

4 “With all gravity”: with honor and dignity; reverent modesty on the part of the children.—*Alford*. Keeping a good decorum in his family.—*Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*

5:14 “Give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully”: give no starting point or opportunity for those who resist and oppose to revile, insult, or slander the Church of God.

Proverbs 22:6 “Train”: initiate, dedicate, or early instruct; from a verb meaning to put something into the mouth; to rub the palate, and cause to swallow. The Hebrew literally is, *initiate a child in accordance with his way, considering his nature, faculties and temperament*. Also, according to his future calling or station, educate him until it becomes second nature, and it will bear fruit all his life long. This also implies training in the right way—the path of obedience—from the very first, from infancy.—Taken from *Pulpit Commentary*.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Lord, personally visiting in the home of Abraham prior to sending judgement upon Sodom, seemed to confer with the two heavenly beings who accompanied Him on this mission, and witnessed to them that He knew Abraham (He later called him friend), would retain the command of his household to the keeping of the way and judgment of the Lord. Afterward this was proven by the obedience of Abraham to offer up his only son Isaac at God’s command. The willingness of Isaac to comply and the absence of resistance from Sarah in this radical move point to the reverence and submission they had toward Abraham.

Samuel, early trained in obedience and servanthood by his mother, Hannah, was given the difficult mission of carrying God's message to Eli concerning the rebellion of his two sons. These men had practiced open fornication, violence and greed right in the Lord's sanctuary. Eli had weakly remonstrated, but had not the courage nor the respect of his sons to stop the wickedness. The Lord speaking through Samuel prophesied the message of doom and judgment upon Eli's household.

David's failure in the training of Adonijah had such grievous results. Adonijah's treachery was not the only tragic event involving David's family after his sin with Bathsheba. The disgraceful misconduct and death of Amnon and the public mockery, lewdness and conspiracy, and later gruesome death of Absalom brought unspeakable grief and heartache to the man who had sought after God's heart in his younger years. Although he was graciously forgiven by God, there were still painful consequences to violating the laws of God, which he reaped until his death. His final song, remorseful yet triumphant in the mercy and grace of God, can be found in II Samuel 23:1-7.

The verses in Proverbs offer valuable insights: Early instruction; careful and constant observation and study of each child; diligent administration of the rod; and loving, wise, firm reproof are ways Wisdom has laid out for the training up of children.

The New Testament instructions give a picture of the kind of order God requires in the homes of men and women of God.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *First Things First:* Discuss the problem of the training and discipline of children when the character of the parent demonstrates lack of self-control and discipline.
2. *Painful Reaping:* What is the result of the lack of training in the early years?
3. *A Proper Example:* Faithfulness in maintaining order and honor in the home prepares a person for what later responsibilities?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I marvel at the reliability of God's Word as it applies to the home. Although we are limited in this lesson by time and space, the basic principles laid out here are tested and proven, and when diligently applied, will bring about peace and rest. (Proverbs 29:17)

Consistent, loving discipline is an act of faith and obedience on the part of the parent. We may not see immediate results. We sow the good seeds and refuse to be weary in well doing, believing and trusting that when we have done our best, God will do His part.

Left to themselves, neglected, not having received close observation and personal training, children do not naturally walk in God's ways. God entrusts us with these arrows, misshapen and bent by a stubborn sinful nature, having characters with both strengths and weaknesses. Our task is to study and know the particular strengths and weaknesses of each child and train accordingly; minimize the weaknesses and maximize the strengths, and present back to God—a profit. Of course, the only way to fully accomplish that task is to make them wise unto salvation (I Timothy 3:15), and then pray they choose the ways of the Lord.

The underlying principle is that our personal lives must be in order—under submission to God—if we are to bring our children into submission. Our lack of obedience, temperance or personal discipline always reflects itself in the lives of our children. The outcome is a spiritual handicap that keeps us from being useful in the work of the Lord and to souls around us.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

Although this lesson is for both fathers and mothers, I cannot help but recall a poem Bro. Ostis Wilson read our congregation every mother's day when I was a young person. It essentially dealt with discipline in the home and was entitled, "The Meanest Mother." I would sit enthralled as he read about the mother who made her children eat cereal, eggs, or toast for breakfast while other children got to eat candy. This mother insisted on knowing where her children were at all times and then expected them to be home exactly when they said they would – and not one minute later. These children had to bathe and don clean clothes every day, and could not sleep till noon like their friends. This mother actually had the audacity to punish her children's disobediences. The last line reads this way: "She 'forced' us to grow up into God-fearing, educated, honest adults. Using this as a background, I am trying to raise my three children. I stand a little taller and I am filled with pride when my children call me mean. Because, you see, I thank God, He gave me the meanest mother in the whole world."

The truth is, raising children and maintaining discipline and order in the home is one of the most challenging jobs a father and mother will ever face. Consistently day-in-and-day-out going to "battle" with the little ones entrusted into our care – knowing exactly how and when to balance love and discipline is hard, mainly because it requires us to be disciplined, as well. Fortunately, children *do* come with manuals – the Bible, but we *cannot* raise them without God's wisdom and His help. While we will not ever be "perfect parents" we should strive, by God's grace, to discipline and order our homes so that when we look back – *regardless of what choices the children themselves make* – we can say we did the best we knew how to do.

--Sis. Julie Elwell

JUNE 5, 2016

INDUSTRY IN THE HOME

Psalm 128:2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

Proverbs 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

Proverbs 22:29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

31:13 She [the virtuous woman] seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Ecclesiastes 9:10a Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;

10:18 By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

I Thessalonians 4:11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

II Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

MEMORY VERSE: Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord. —Romans 12:11

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It was God’s plan from the beginning that man should industriously work and care for his household, while a wise woman works diligently as a keeper of her home. This work ethic, which has spiritual implications as well, should be trained into the lives of the children.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 128:2 “Labour of thine hands”: toil; hence, a work, produce, or property (as the result of labor).

Proverbs 10:4 “Slack”: remiss; lax; negligent; idle; slothful.

22:29 “Diligent”: quick; prompt; ready; skilled. “Mean”: obscure; low.

Ecclesiastes 10:18 “Decayeth”: sags or caves in. “Droppeth through”: leaks.

Romans 12:11 “Slothful”: shrinking; timid—hence idle; lazy; troublesome.

“Business”: swiftness to show zealous diligence; i.e. one's "best" (full effort by making haste).—*Helps Word Studies*

LESSON BACKGROUND

When God created Adam and placed him in the beautiful garden, immediately He gave him the responsibility of dressing and keeping it. Eve was created to be Adam’s helper, suitable for him, so we know duties and responsibilities that were hers are implied here. This is part of the order that God established in the home.

After Adam and Eve sinned, their labors were intensified. Adam’s duty of providing for his family was going to require the sweat of his brow, as thorns and weeds would ever be his nemesis. Eve’s physical labors would be in the bringing forth and care of children, who would now be born in man’s image, with a natural bent toward selfishness and sin. Still she was to be her husband’s helper, to aid and succor him.

In reading the law given to the Israelites, we can see the order that God ordained in the home and community. Diligence, honesty, justice and integrity were requirements in business, finances, farming, family, and social life.

David's writings and the wisdom of Solomon dealt much with diligence versus slothfulness. Faithfulness and hard work were enjoined, with the accompanying promise being happiness and prosperity in the home.

Paul's writings exhorted men in the church to be examples in their work habits. He condemned laziness, dependence upon others, and dishonest means for acquiring wealth. He endeavored to be an example to them in this, as identified in II Thessalonians 3. In this passage, Paul noted that he worked hard (his occupation was tent-making) night and day to provide his own living, so he would not make the saints feel they had to support him.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *A Spiritual Connection:* Explain the way a person's work habits directly correlate to his spiritual success or failure.
2. *Importance of Training:* Do children naturally "know how" to work diligently? What about the importance of example on the part of the parents?
3. *Practical Solutions:* Share tried and proven ways to teach diligence, industry and initiative to children.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In our current society there is a growing problem with men not rising to their responsibility to provide for their families, women not being faithful keepers at home, and young people growing into adulthood not having been taught these basic important life principles. Financial integrity and hard work must be taught by example and precept and diligently trained into children, beginning with very young children and continuing on into young adulthood. Care must be taken not to fall into the "entitlement" mentality being promoted by corrupt government policies with an ungodly world view.

Here's a brief overview of training industry in our children: Your goal is to take them from complete dependence on you as a parent doing everything for them, to where they can live independently yet have a servant's heart, to bring them to a place where they can help you and have the ability to take over your tasks when necessary, and also contribute to their community.

First, you start out doing the task for the child. Secondly, as he grows, you do it while he watches and you explain in detail what you are doing, how you do it, and why. Next, have him do the task with you watching and instructing. This is the part where the temptation is to "spare" the mess and do it yourself. Resist that temptation and see the process through to completion! After he has mastered it, then he can be assigned to complete that job on his own, still under the close observation of someone who "looks well" to his ways. Faithfulness, accountability, promptness and thoroughness need to be taught in the process.

Finally, there is the good feeling of accomplishment that is so vital to his self-esteem and spiritual understanding as well. A job well done is its own reward. A busy, responsible child is a happy child.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

“Why do we have to pick up rocks?” “There are too many!” “We’ll never get done!” “This is too hard!” “This is so dumb!” These are a few of the familiar words from children who are being disciplined to work. I’m not referring to a back-breaking and difficult thing, but just work around the house. Keeping children busy keeping order in the home will bring great rewards. When you expect your children to be a part of all the household duties you are teaching them to be *givers* in life. Letting them practice industrious activity in the home will aid them to succeed in life. This is one reason saint’s children are sought after by businesses in the world. They become young men and women who can carry the burdens of a job. They learned hard work at home and it gave them confidence, because they were taught to listen and obey orders.

Making children obey by giving them chores to do, making it a fun opportunity, and staying with them till they are done is very important when they are little. How well do I remember this old car we had; it wasn’t a Ford or Chevy, it was a Hudson Hornet. We learned the blessing of teamwork with this old car. Every so often we would go to the dump. (For all the young readers, this was a place for the public to take their trash and dump it in large piles). We would take our BB guns and shoot rats and mice while mama waited for us to have a little fun. Mama had to use all of our talents to operate the standard transmission in the Hudson Hornet. When we would come to a stop sign with a little incline, one would get on the floor board and operate the gas pedal while she worked the brake and clutch. When you pushed harder on the gas pedal and mama let her foot off the clutch, it was fun to hear the engine rev up and sometimes the wheels would spin and the whole car would lurch. This whole process of the lurching, spinning, and the engine noise made the trip to the dump so much fun. I still enjoy going to the dump today!

As parents we can make the dull, monotonous things seem fun by letting our children participate. Having a home where everyone pitches in and is responsible for a few tasks, helps make the load so much lighter and makes the home more enjoyable. There is an old saying that says, “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop”. Too much entertainment without learning how to work spoils children. Remember Proverbs 29:17: “Correct thy son (work with him) and he shall give thee rest; yea he shall give delight unto thy soul.”

--Bro. James Bell

JUNE 12, 2016

PURITY IN THE HOME

Leviticus 18:24 Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you. (For personal reading: See verses 1-23 for the context of this verse.)

Deuteronomy 7:26 Neither shalt bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.

Proverbs 20:7 The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

31:10 Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Titus 2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world...

MEMORY VERSE: I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes... —Psalm 101:2-3a

CENTRAL THOUGHT: For those who have consecrated their home unto the Lord, the purity of the home is of utmost importance—the sanctity of the marriage relationship; purity among family members; and making sure literature and all other media within the home are wholesome and clean.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Leviticus 18:24 “Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things”: sins of incest, adultery, infant/child sacrifice, homosexuality and bestiality; and improper sexual desires and behavior. These sins were the primary reasons for the destruction of the world before the flood and of Sodom and Gomorrah; and the overthrow of the Canaanite nations.

Deuteronomy 7:26 “Abomination”: detestable; of physical repugnance; properly, something disgusting (morally); an abhorrence; especially idolatry or an idol. “A cursed thing”: a thing hostile to theocracy, and therefore (in the strictest application) to be either banned or destroyed, or, in the case of certain objects (e.g. silver and gold, vessels of brass and iron—Joshua 6:19, 24), set apart to sacred uses. Referring especially to individuals—one having a relic of a Canaanite god in his house should become cursed, or banned, and the relic cursed, banned and exterminated.

Proverbs 20:7 “integrity”: blameless; integrity of mind. “The entire, unimpaired state of anything, particularly of the mind; moral soundness or purity; incorruptness; uprightness; honesty.” —*Webster*

Proverbs 31:11 “So that he hath no need of spoil”: Some scholars interpret it thus of the husband: *he shall not lack profit or gain*. The Septuagint understands it of the woman: *such a one shall not lack spoils, or food, or even spiritual provisions*.

Titus 2:1 “Which become sound doctrine”: which are fitting, suitable, proper or consistent with healthy, wholesome instruction.

5 “Chaste”: holy; sacred; free from defilement, inside and out.

7 “Uncorruptness”: soundness; purity

LESSON BACKGROUND

The eighteenth chapter of Leviticus deals with purity within the home, between close family members. A closer examination of these commandments in personal Bible study will reveal the holy standard God requires in the home; of the honor and sanctity of the marriage bed, respect of personal privacy, and careful modesty between brothers and sisters. Someone has rightly said, “When this is broken in the home, all kinds of evil are let loose.” These were the kinds of evil that were rampant in the lives of the pagan Canaanites; in their homes and in their worship rituals. God wanted all traces of the lewd worship practices destroyed, nor could they be brought into their homes: the drawings, sculpted images, relics, dances and gyrations, music, and temple prostitution (Deuteronomy 7:6).

God also condemns unlawful behavior between those of the same gender and between people and animals. God revealed that He is a God of order, holiness, honor and purity. The pagan gods, in contrast, were evil and lewd characters. God wanted His people to be separate from these things.

In Proverbs we can see the characteristics of a man of integrity, a child whose doings are pure, and a chaste and virtuous woman who can safely be trusted. In order for a spouse to have the kind of trust that is described here, it is important that all thoughts, words and actions be chaste and entirely and consistently pure.

Paul wrote to both Timothy and Titus of the importance of purity, both in young men and women and in the older ones who were to teach them. All were required to be examples of the believers, so there would never be cause for the Word of God to be blasphemed by the world.

--Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Prevention*: Incest has been an age-old plague in homes; sadly, in many “Christian” homes as well. How can a wise father and mother prevent compromising situations or deal with existing problems?
2. *What is Proper*: Describe how a balanced standard of modesty will help maintain privacy and respect between family members.
3. *Worldly Defilement*: What kinds of things bring worldly influences into the home, and what can a family do to keep them out?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Reading heart-rending statistics on child abuse within the home, listening to real-life stories from people of all ages, realizing the terrible scourge—yes, even within homes of professing Christians—knowing that even more is hidden than ever revealed has prompted me to include this in these teachings. It is awkward, difficult, and rarely addressed. But it is necessary to clearly teach what God has NOT avoided mentioning in His Word. Improper sexual relations between non-married family members is a crime, is an abomination, and is a leading factor of drug and alcohol addiction, mental illness, suicide, teenage and adult prostitution, criminal activity, and eating disorders.

God has issued safeguards in His Word. Modesty is one of them. A mother who “looks well to the ways of her household” is another. Daily Bible reading and prayer keeps the devil at bay in this area, as well.

We also need to pray for wisdom and discernment into the hearts of our family members. We ought to keep daily vigilance and communication with each of our children. Answer their questions about their body functions in a frank, honest, non-belittling, non-shaming, scientific fashion. Keep ahead of Satan’s tactics by training your children how to deal with encountering pornography, advances from predators, and uncomfortable feelings about family members. A prepared child will be a child better able to ward off abuse.

Finally, let us purge our homes of all ungodly media that de-sensitize the mind toward evil, emphasize the sensual, and open the doors wide to Satan’s control of the home.

In a positive way, teach the joy and blessing of purity. Contrast stories of people who went astray in this area, and the reaping that followed, with stories of people who have been true in their relationships and have had peace and happiness in their lives.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

Years ago, a health administrator visited a rural school system to warn the students of the danger of drinking water from nearby creeks and streams. There could be contaminants present that would make you very sick or even cause death. A student raised her hand in protest and declared, "I've drunk from the crick all my life and I ain't seen a germ yet!" While this may cause us to chuckle at the ignorance of this student and maybe the locale in general, there is a truth in the matter. Many contaminants are not visible. We can become very sick from food poisoning and never see the salmonella. The air we breathe may have deadly gases, but they are invisible to the eye. Indeed, we may even drink the water and never see that it is contaminated.

So it is spiritually. The enemy is very intent on slipping anything into our homes and lives that may seem harmless, but in actuality is very deadly. We may be totally unaware of the invisible poisons. The end result will make us weak and can cause instant or eventual spiritual death. We do not have the ability to discern the dangers without the Holy Spirit. We must have the Holy Spirit living within us to give insight and warnings against the seen and unseen evils of this world.

"Watch and pray, the tempter may be near us
Keep thy heart with jealous care
Lest the door a moment left unguarded
Evil thoughts may enter there."

--Sis. LaDawna Adams

JUNE 19, 2016

HOSPITALITY IN THE HOME

Genesis 18:1 And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.

7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

8 And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

Romans 12:13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach. (Also Titus 1:8).

5:10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

1 Peter 4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

MEMORY VERSE: Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. —Hebrews 13:2

CENTRAL THOUGHT: One special plan of God for the home is that of hospitality. From the beginning of time, His believing children have opened their hearts and homes to others, sharing what abundant or meager store they had with friends and strangers alike.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Genesis 18:1 “The Lord”: The Son of God in a human form. “The plains of Mamre”: the oak tree of Mamre. Obviously Abraham had pitched his tent where it could be shaded from the hot sun.

2 “Three men”: The Lord and two angels. It appears Abraham did not recognize them at first, but did later, as the Lord drew near to talk to Abraham, while the other two went on to visit Lot in Sodom (Chapter 19:1).

4 “Let a little water I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet”: it was a necessary part of the custom of hospitality in that time and place to wash the feet and ankles of weary travelers who walked barefoot or in sandals.

Romans 12:13 “Distributing to the necessity of saints”: Communicating or sharing with the needs of those whom God has selected to be His people. “Given to hospitality”: Earnestly pursue

opportunities to entertain strangers in one’s home with warmth, friendliness and generosity.

1 Peter 4:9 “Without grudging”: without grumbling or murmuring.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The story of Abraham entertaining his heavenly guests is an object lesson in hospitality; it reveals the custom of ancient times. If you read Jesus’ sermons and observe His own example, then take note of Paul and Peter’s admonitions, there was little difference in the manner of hospitality in their time, as compared to Abraham’s era. I believe we can conclude that the spirit of hospitality is something that transcends the passage of time and geographical location. Followers of God everywhere are commanded by Him to open heart and home to others.

We can read in the Gospels how Jesus was received into the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and how he loved to frequent this home. We can also read how he admonished a Pharisee for his lack of hospitality while He was a guest in his home. “As ye have done it unto one of the least of these,” Jesus said to his disciples, as he taught them to show kindness to all, “Ye have done it unto me.”

The New Testament church practiced hospitality as they opened their homes to the needy, the traveling apostles, and the circle of believers. Hospitality was especially expected of bishops—pastors—and deacons and their families to be generous hosts, as part of the requirement for their ordination to those positions.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Angels Unaware*: Abraham saw three visitors approaching. According to Hebrews 13:2, he didn’t recognize them immediately. How is this an example for us to follow? Which teaching of Jesus does this make you think of?
2. *A Household of Hospitality*: Which scriptures teach the importance of both husband and wife being hospitable?
3. *A Warning*: Which scripture gives a warning about our attitude? Why is this important?

4. *In Disguise*: Our hospitality (or lack thereof) may have hidden implications, according to our memory verse. What are they?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The true spirit of the Gospel can best be shared to others right in our own home. All the blessings and treasures God has put within our home because of His Presence, can be felt in the spirit or atmosphere of the home. Guests who are shown the gentleness, generosity and love of Christ, who observe the peace and harmony between family members, notice the joy and orderliness that characterizes the home, naturally and without pretense, can be warmed and greatly influenced toward God without a word spoken to them about Christianity. It is all around them. The home is permeated with it. And this can be true if you are single. God's blessing is still upon your home as you consecrate it to Him and His service.

This is God's plan. His blessings don't just stay hidden; they flow out, spilling over and refreshing weary hearts. This is what God had in mind from the beginning, that a home, a family, would be a picture to the world of *His Heart* and *His Family*.

So share it. Open up your heart; share a delicious meal; make people comfortable and warm; let them in on a wonderful secret: "He blesseth the habitation of the just."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

Memories of numerous times when hospitality was shown to me bring back feelings of warmth and endearment for the ones who so unselfishly gave of themselves to provide me with lodging and comfort in a strange place. Before adulthood I and my family often found ourselves among new people and away from home as we searched for God's people.

No doubt, those who shared their lodging, meals, and fellowship with us have underestimated the spiritual and emotional health they imparted to us. Their hospitality made us feel valuable, welcome, secure, appreciated, and loved. May God help us never to underestimate the blessing that our sacrificial hospitality provides to another soul.

--Bro. Jeremy Booher

JUNE 26, 2016

THE PURPOSE OF THE HOME

To Be an Example of God's Church

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

To Preserve Godly Seed

Malachi 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Isaiah 65:23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

MEMORY VERSE: Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.— Revelation 19:7-8

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In the beginning, God instituted marriage as a pattern and example of Christ and His bride, the Church, which He ordained before the world began, and for which He suffered and died that He might be one with her in close fellowship, both on earth and forever in eternity. The home was also the place through which He sought to replenish the earth with godly seed; a place to instruct them in His ways, demonstrate His plan, and preserve, to the end of time, godly men and women.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ephesians 5:23 “And he is the saviour of the body”: Himself being Saviour. Christ is the preserver or deliverer of His body, the church.

5:26 “Sanctify”: set apart; make holy; consecrate. “With the washing of water by the word”: cleansing with the washing, or laver, of the water *in* the Word.—Greek.

Malachi 2:15 “Yet had he the residue of the spirit”: There are so many interpretations of this; it is hard to tell exactly what the meaning is. Here are a few: “Not one who has even a small portion of the Spirit does this [acts in this way toward his wife].” —NASB. “Didn’t the one God make us with a remnant of His life breath?” —Holman Christian Standard Bible. The ESV says, “Did He not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the

one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth." This seems to fit better with the context.

16 "He hateth putting away": God hates divorce. "For one covereth violence with his garment": Some say *garment* refers to a man's wife; that he is covering her with violence. Other interpretations disagree, rendering it "he conceals violence with outward appearances." "Deal not treacherously": do not act deceitfully or unfaithfully in the marital relation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul's essay in Ephesians on the deeper meaning of marriage takes us all the way back to the beginning. He refers to Genesis 2:24, which Jesus also quoted when He taught about marriage and divorce in Matthew 19. Jesus went on to strengthen the bond of marriage by His solemn word of warning: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Paul reveals the beautiful connection of marriage to the relationship of Christ with his bride, the church, opening our eyes to the profound seriousness of "They two shall be one."

The prophet Malachi, in his stern message condemning the priests of Israel for their wickedness, revealed God's heart about marriage: "I hate divorce!" The priests were dealing violently and unfaithfully with their wives and God was not pleased. Malachi asks the question, "Why did He make one?" and answered, "That He might seek a godly seed." Adam Clarke commented, "He made one pair from whom all the rest might proceed, that he might have a holy offspring; that children being a marked property of one man and one woman, proper care might be taken that they should be brought up in the discipline of the Lord."

There is a concept presented here that is echoed in other Biblical passages: that of preserving a godly seed. We read of it in the story of Moses, where God put into the hearts of Moses' parents, as they observed at his birth that he was a special child, that they were to hide him and protect him (Hebrews 11:23). There is also the instance in II Chronicles 22 where a godly couple, Jehoshabeath and her husband, priest Jehoiada, hid baby Joash from the wicked Queen Athaliah for six years in their temple home. These examples are a type of the preservation God intends for parents to give their children in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation.

These passages give us a two-fold Divine purpose for the institution of marriage. The joy--the pleasure--the happiness--are amazing and wonderful benefits accompanying that purpose.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *What it Represents*: Marriage is a type of what other Divine institution? Explain then why Satan tries so hard to destroy marriages.
2. *The Purpose*: Although we live in a sin-filled, imperfect world with all kinds of imperfect home situations, God still has the best design. Describe the best way for children to be raised, and why.
3. *When it Doesn't Go Right*: Share ways for striving for godliness and raising a "godly seed" in the home when the "ideal" isn't realized (divorce; death; starting a new life after living in sin). Share promises from God's Word for the widow and the fatherless.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The Divine Purpose. This came to me so strongly as I prayed about this concluding lesson. We can see so clearly in the Scriptures, studying the passages in Genesis, prophetic allusions in the Psalms and prophets' writings, Jesus' teachings in the Gospels, and Paul's writings, and finally, John's vision in Revelations, the beautiful picture of the bridegroom and the bride—Jesus and His Church. Marriage is the living, human example of that union. The purpose for a husband's giving himself for his wife; the purpose for her reverence and submission for him; the fruit of their union being the blessing of God—all these have their substance in the heavenly union of Christ and all the redeemed, which He purchased with His own blood.

There is a definite correlation between the confused mess in religion today concerning the true church, and the confused mess in marriage relationships. There is no doubt but what Satan schemes to destroy both the substance and the shadow; to obliterate from man's mind the original plan of God.

The other component to the Divine purpose is the desire God has for having a godly seed perpetuated through the generations unto the end of time. His plan for the family unit to be whole and complete is to this end: that His truth would endure to all generations through the diligent teaching, vigilant care, enduring love, and strengthening joy of the home.

May we each be strengthened and renewed in our vision of a godly home and the beautiful Church of God, and the mission we must have to preserve God's truth in our children. Time is certainly and swiftly drawing to a close. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

A marriage and home can be honourable, beautiful and fulfilling; but the truth is, not all of them are. Even Christian marriages many times lose their first love and are little more than cohabitation. I will be up-front with you; there are no quick fixes to past hurts and failures in marriage. Most people are not willing to put forth the humility and work it takes to make a marriage successful; they simply divorce and find another companion, or they bide their time, burying their hurts and dreams with them.

In conclusion to this series of lessons, I felt it appropriate to offer helpful hints for hurting marriages and homes.

- *Man up* to accept full responsibility for your carnality or failures. There is no excuse. Quit blaming one another.
- Repent before God and your companion--without ever mentioning the other's faults or offences--commit that to God.
- Quit trying to change him or her. Accept them for who they are, forbearing their weaknesses and focusing on their strengths.
- Stop--immediately!--the habit of negative verbal abuse and offer words that give hope and encouragement.

- Show them you are interested in some real soul-searching communication: spiritual needs, his or her needs, dreams, vision.
- Quit thinking so much about yourself and focus on meeting your spouse's emotional, spiritual, physical, and temporal needs.
- Set out to win his or her affections. You did it once! Do it again, even though it may be much tougher this time around. Face it with courage and patience.
- Invest time, energy, and money into togetherness; it is worth it. Dates, trips, walks, flowers (for her), parks....
- Renew your vows! Get them out of the closet. Remember the vows you made to your companion on that wedding day:

"I _____ take thee _____ to be my lawfully wedded husband/wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my vow."

--Bro. Bob Wilson