

The Christian Home

INTRODUCTION

- Good morning, good afternoon, or good evening! Good to be with you. I really appreciate Barry giving me this opportunity to speak with all of you great folks primarily in Africa today but also from many other locations. I know most of you are associated with churches of Christ but there may be some that are not. I am thankful that you are all on this call and I hope we all learn something from our time together today.
- I've known Barry for many, many years (we live in the same neighborhood) and Barry has known many of you for many, many years but you and I have not met until now. Let me say this is a great honor for me to be able to talk with you today and I thank Barry for the opportunity to do so.
- A little bit about myself. I am married to Becky. Her official name is Rebecca. We just celebrated our 46th wedding anniversary last month. Becky was 20 years old, I was one month from my 20th birthday when we married.
- We have three children and 7 grandchildren but today we live alone.
- I serve as an elder at the Madison Church of Christ (12 years now). I retired from my job as an electrical engineer and project manager at the end of last year.
- Becky is a licensed professional counselor. She works primarily with members of the Madison CoC (large church). She works with individuals, husbands and wives, and children. Her specialties are trauma counseling (helping someone who has experienced a traumatic event in their life) and children's counseling.

CLASS SUBJECT

- The title of today's class is "The Christian Home" or you might prefer to call it "The Christian Family".
- This is a very, very broad topic. In the home there is typically a husband, a wife, and many times there are children (or in our culture we call them kids sometimes), there could be grandparents, adult siblings and others. We could talk about so many things in lots of detail about the Christian home, but it would take hours if not days to do so.
- Topics could include:
 - o The husband-and-wife relationship (how God wants husbands and wives to treat each other)
 - o The parent and child relationship (how God wants us to raise our children)
 - o The father-child relationship (how God wants fathers to be fathers, the father's role)
 - o The mother-child relationship (how God wants mothers to be mothers, the mother's role)
- Since I only have one hour, we will look at some general, yet important aspects of the Christian home.
- Please ask questions in WhatsApp and Barry will present some of those at the end of class or maybe even in the middle of class.

PREAMBLE

- Before I get into this class I want you to know two important things:
 - o First, I am not teaching this class because Americans have figured out how to develop and maintain the perfect Christian home. We Christians here in America have not been completely successful in doing that so please don't think I'm coming to you as a representative of a country who has it all figured out. We don't have it all figured out.
 - o Second, I'm not teaching this class because I successfully raised three Christian children who now have their own families. My children were raised in a Christian home all their lives and they were all raised the same way. Today, in their late 30's to early 40's in age, one of my children is an atheist, one is an agnostic, and one is a Christian. All three have decent morals today, but they currently have their faith in different places.
- Clearly, I am not an expert at raising children in a Christian home. I'm not.
- So, I'm teaching this class from the perspective of what the Bible says about Christian Homes. The Bible is the source of God's guidance and it's the best place to start on any study on how we are to live, how we are to treat others, what our priorities should be in our lives, and so much more.
- I don't have any PowerPoint slides with words or pictures for this class. You only need your Bible...the words of God. You may want to write down some of the scripture references we'll be reading today so you can refer to them in your own personal Bible study on this subject later.

FAMILIAR SCRIPTURES

- First, I Want to read to you some familiar scriptures about Christian homes:

Ephesians 5:22-33 (ESV)

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

30 because we are members of his body.

31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

- Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus...Christians, that for the most part did not have a Jewish background or Jewish culture. In verse 31 when Paul wrote **"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."** he is citing Genesis 2:24...written about a time when the Jewish people did not exist. Paul is not writing about traditions or culture, but is writing about what God wants in a husband and a wife.
- In Colossians 3:18-21 Paul writes to another group of Christians (the church in Colossi) about this subject but also includes some information on parenting too.

Colossians 3:18-21 (ESV)

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

- In the Bible there are very few teachings directly from Jesus regarding families. When he was being tested by the Pharisees on the subject of divorce, Jesus said:

Mark 10:6-9 (ESV)

6 But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'

Jesus then quotes Genesis 2:24 (read earlier).

7 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,

8 and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh.

9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

- Having read these scriptures...putting them fresh in our minds, I'm going to leave them for a moment (we'll come back to some of these) and talk about one of the things Jesus came to this earth to do. I know this is going to seem to be off subject but please bear with me.
- In the middle of his ministry, Jesus and his disciples were travelling in the northern most areas of Israel. They went to a place called Caesarea Philippi located just south of Mount Hermon, the largest mountain in Israel (mentioned in the Bible about 15 times).
- Let me set the scene of this place before we read what Jesus said there.
- At the foot of Mount Hermon was a large cave with a spring of water coming out from it. The spring serves as a major source of water at the beginning of the Jordan river. Because of the abundance of water, the area of very fertile and attractive. As a result, through the years many pagan temples were built outside the cave and in the city of Caesarea Philippi which was nearby. The area became a center of pagan worship.

- No doubt, when Jesus and his disciples were there, they saw the pagan temples where pagan worship was held and that worship would have been different than what they were familiar with in Jerusalem.
- The pagan gods worshipped at this place included the Canaanite god Baal in the Old Testament period, the Greek god Pan in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and Augustus and Zeus. During the Roman era, there was also the worship of Caesar (Emperor worship) and the goddess Nemesis, as well as a cult of sacred dancing goats.
- It was at this place strange place where Matthew recorded some important questions Jesus asked and remember, we are working toward learning about one of the important things Jesus came to this earth to do.

Matthew 16:13-20 (ESV)

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

- After seeing all the pagan gods and those who worshipped them, Jesus asked his disciples who did the people see who he was. After hearing their answers, he asked them who did they say he was.
- Peter answered correctly **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**
- The word Christ is from the Greek word meaning “the anointed one”. In the OT we read of the Messiah. Messiah is the Hebrew word for “the anointed one”. The Messiah and the Christ refer to the same person...the anointed one.
- Those who were anointed were prophets, priests, and kings. Jesus was all three and was the anointed one the Israelites had been waiting on.
- Then Jesus makes a very profound statement in verse 18 and tells us one of the things Jesus came to do.

18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

- Jesus said **“and on this rock I will build my church”**. One of the things Jesus came to do was to build his church. “The rock” is most likely referring to the foundation of Peter’s faith when he said who Jesus was.

- When Jesus said “I will build my church”, he said as recorded in the Greek “I will build my Ekklesia”.
- Ekklesia was a very familiar term the disciples knew. It was used to reference their governing bodies or assemblies. Many of the assemblies they were familiar with would have been acting in ways different than the teachings of Jesus.
- So, Jesus says he will build his Ekklesia, his assembly, his church, his family and it is going to be different, it is going to be better than all the other Ekklesia's the disciples were familiar with.
- And since a family is an assembly, a group...yes, we can extend this to mean that Jesus was saying he would build his family, the Christian family, the Christian home.
- These Christian families, these Christian homes that Christ wants would be different, they would be better than the homes the world was familiar with.
- Have you thought about that? Have you thought that the family structure and parenting methods you were raised with and that are prevalent in your culture may not be what Jesus came to build? Just something to think about.
- Now, let's not forget that Jesus compared the relationship of Christ and the church to the relationship between the husband and wife (Ephesians 5). The husband and the wife are the two main components of the Christian home.
- Without the husband and wife working together in the example set by Christ and the church, we will not be able to have the Christian homes Jesus intended for us to have.
- So, what is the example set by Christ and the church? And remember, the analogy is that the husband is like Christ, and the wife is like the church.
- Let's go back to some of those scriptures we read earlier.

Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

- Of all the things Jesus did while here on the earth, don't you agree that when Jesus gave up his life on the cross and did so for the church, for his Ekklesia which he was building, it was the most important thing he did? That act of love was the pinnacle act of love from Jesus to the church and to the entire world.
- This verse (Ephesians 5:25) in the analogy where the husband and the wife are analogous to Christ and the church describes the most important thing in the Christian home, the Christian family.
- The most important thing a husband can do is to love his wife. It all starts here.
- What does that mean?
- The Greek word translated into “love” is Agape. There were several different Greek words for love, one is in regard to family love, one is in regard to romantic or sexual love, and one is in regard to friendship love, and there are others.
- Agape is an unconditional, selfless, charitable love of action.
- In this verse, Paul uses the word Agape and calls for Christian husbands to have a selfless, sacrificial, and action-oriented life with their wives. It's modeled after Christ's ultimate sacrifice for the church.
- This means prioritizing your wives' well-being above your own, showing deep commitment to your wife, cherishing your wives' spiritual and physical needs and then taking care of them, and

being willing to serve and make sacrifices for her benefit, not out of obligation but out of deep value in her and delight in doing things for her.

- This may be different than how you were raised...this may be different from your culture.
- But just like when Jesus stood among all the pagan churches and said I will build my church and it would be different that all of this that you see, Jesus calls for husbands to be different than what we see all around us.
- This is the most important thing for the Christian home. It all starts here, with the husband and his sacrificial love and actions for his wife.
- If you are a husband, I want you to think right now about how you treat your wife. Is it in alignment of what God wants, what we just read and discussed?
- If not, God is challenging you today to change and be different than those around you because you are the head of a Christian home, and as head of that important institution, how it functions and how it grows is highly dependent on your Agape love for your wife.
- Remember what Genesis 2:24 says:

Genesis 2:24 (ESV)

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- "One flesh" is thought of many times in the sexual sense, that they came together and became as one with the sexual act, but it is much more than that.
- The husband and wife must speak with one voice (Christ and the church can't speak differently). It is the same in the Christian home.
- When you Agape love your wife, you are helping make it possible to have a voice of unity in the home.
- If the children see the father speak unloving things or do unloving things to their mother, they lose respect for their father. Remember what we read earlier in Colossians 3:21:

Colossians 3:21 (ESV)

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

- We can discourage our children directly by doing or saying something unloving to them, but we can also discourage our children indirectly when we do or say something unloving to their mother.
- The husband-and-wife relationship is the cornerstone of the Christian home. If that relationship is strong, you are well on your way to having a great Christian home, a great Christian family.
- But in America...and I'm sure it is the same in Africa, we have some homes where there is only a mother or only a father. Only one parent is raising a child or raising several children. While this is more difficult for the parent, it does not mean you cannot have a great Christian home.
- I've seen several single parent families be very successful in having a great Christian home.
- I wanted to mention that because I didn't want you to think the only way you can have a good Christian home is to have both the husband and wife, the mother and the father. You can be successful in your Christian home even if there is only one parent.
- Okay, let's look at Ephesians 5:33 for a moment.

Ephesians 5:33 (ESV)

However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

- I teach a 13-week class on this one verse. Barry, I don't think we have that much time today so let me boil it down to one or two important points.
- We've already talked about the husband loving his wife so I won't repeat all that.
- But why did Paul write "let the wife see that she respects her husband"?
- Why didn't Paul write "and let the wife also love her husband"?
- Instead, he wrote that wives should respect their husbands. Paul, writing from the inspiration of God, was identifying what a husband and a wife's biggest need is.
- A wife's biggest need is to feel loved so Paul wrote that a husband should love their wife as himself.
- A husband's biggest need is to feel respected so Paul wrote that wives should respect their husbands.
- I mention this verse to show that a successful Christian home does not depend solely on the husband showing Agape love to their wife. The wife has a responsibility as well.
- Husbands have a deep need to feel respected. They need to know their work is appreciated by their wives. They need to know their opinions on a certain situation are important. And that is just a couple of examples.
- Good Christian homes begin with a good relationship between the husband and wife:
 - o The husband and wife communicate (real communication about problems and struggles and feelings)
 - o The wife turns toward the husband and the husband turns toward the wife in times of need (best friends)
 - o The husband loves his wife and the wife respects her husband
- Do you remember what God said after creating Adam?

Genesis 2:18-24 (ESV)

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

~~19 Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.~~

~~20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.~~

21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- God's purpose in having families is seen in verse 18 when God said "I will make him a **helper** fit for him."
- Family members are made to help each other! Help each other do what? Within the family we help each other live our lives every day.
- In Christian families, we also help each other reach our goal of being in heaven with God one day.
- We've read several scriptures today about Christian families, homes, husbands, and wives. But I've not read any scriptures that tell a story about the perfect family. Where do we find in the Bible a story about the perfect family?
- Was it Adam and Eve? No, far from perfect as one son murdered the other son.
- Was it the family of King David? No, when you read his story it's full of problems and imperfections.
- How many perfect families do you find in the Bible?
- None. There are stories in the Bible of families striving for righteousness and demonstrating love, but they all struggle with imperfections, conflicts, and sin. The Bible uses these imperfect families to illustrate God's grace, and the ongoing process of spiritual growth, rather than presenting an ideal standard of family perfection.
- As we've read together today, God's Word is full of good scriptures about the family.
- We read earlier in Genesis 2:24 that a husband and wife are to be one with each other, depend on each other, and help each other.
- Lets look at some other scriptures related to families.
- When God gave the Ten Commandments to the young nation of Israel he included honoring father and mother.

Exodus 20:12 (ESV)

12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

- This is not a command for children. We adults should honor our fathers and mothers all through their lives.
- Regarding raising children King Solomon wrote:

Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

- Have you ever thought about what is the way a child should go? This proverb is very powerful and reminds us it is our responsibility to teach and train our children.
- God even had Paul write to children about what they should do:

Colossians 3:20 (ESV)

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

- God is pleased when children obey their parents. We need to teach our children the benefits of obedience. That's a long lesson for another day.
- Paul also wrote about how families should care for each other:

1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV)

8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

- So, we are to provide for our immediate and extended families. Food, clothing, and shelter and the list of things a family needs is long.
- Families are important! The Christian home is important.
- And everyone has an important role in the family.
- Obeying all these scriptures is hard enough...we try, then we make mistakes, and our dream of the perfect family disappears.
- But even though a family is not perfect, it can still fulfill the purpose God gave it. To help each other grow physically, to grow mentally, and most importantly, to grow spiritually.
- Today we basically looked at two things regarding the Christian Home:
 - o First, Jesus came to this earth to build his Ekklesia. His assembly, his church, his family. And that it would be different than what everyone was familiar with. In the midst of all our traditions and the way we were raised, Jesus calls for us to be his Ekklesia, his assembly, his family, his Christian home.
 - o Second, God uses the relationship between Christ and the church as an analogy of the relationship between the husband and the wife making the husband/wife relationship the most important part of the Christian home. Focus on the husband/wife relationship and if you get that right, the rest should be easier.
- I could have focused on some other specific aspects of the Christian home but I wanted to give you some time to ask some specific questions and if neither Barry or I feel prepared to answer your question right now, we will let you know that and will prepare an answer and get it to you.
- Questions and Comments?