

# HOMES THAT HONOR THE LORD

Valley Bible Chapel

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## **I. Introduction and Explanation of our Study**

The character of this study is to offer observations on homes in the Bible where the Lord was honored in a specific way. Intended is the concept that we can learn from these homes and be better able to see our own homes as places where the Lord is honored and His commitments fulfilled.

None of the homes to be studied may be classed as "perfect homes". All will have faults of their own but in spite of failure in some areas will be able to show the glory of God in others. Our point is not that we should arrive at a level of perfection but that we should learn how the Lord is honored and apply that learning in our experience. The weaknesses that will be exhibited in these homes will, in most cases, be apparent, but these human foibles do not spoil the reality of what was positively accomplished. They merely show us that the persons involved were weak in themselves as we are but the weakened areas did not prevent them from exercising strong areas as well.

The homes to be studied are all sociologically isolated to other times. But human nature and behavior change very little, if at all, in the passage of time. Realizing that the domestic situations occurred long ago does not remove them from the path of human experience and we can very easily feel as they felt. The mechanisms of society and culture do not change the foundational concepts that honor the Lord.

Five particular characteristics have been identified in my study of this work and these will be discussed with Biblical homes as illustrative material. The participation of the class is most welcome and the points to be noted are these:

- Homes where God was (is) welcome.
- Homes where God's people are nourished.
- Homes where God's order is respected
- Home where the testimony of God is primary
- Homes that continue the witness of the Lord.

There is some overlapping, of course, and there are other aspects probably of equal importance. But these are the areas where we will work and trust the Scripture to give us guidance in the process.

## II. Homes where the Lord is Welcome

### A. Defining the Concept

By this idea it is understood that God is appreciated and the inhabitants live in respect of His presence.

Now obviously,,,,,

And if anyone wants to test the matter it may be done by:

1. Seeing how the Lord's Name is used
2. Determining if He is a participant in family affairs
3. Does the conduct conform to what would be seen if an actual, physical, visible person were to be present.

There are some practical analogies..and I will begin with this one and class attendants may add some of their own:

*"I wouldn't have said it if I thought he could hear me!"*

### B. The Home of Abraham and Sarah

#### 1. Background Material:

- the family (Gen. 11-12)
- the move (Gen 12)
- the promise (Gen 12)
- a reaffirmation (Gen 15)
- an unhappy circumstance (Gen 16)
- covenant renewal and promise (Gen 17)

#### 2. The Divine Visit (and/or Visitor) (Gen 18)

- the purpose
- the reception
- the renewed promise (18:9 ff)
- the reality of friendship (18:16)

#### 3. Where God is welcome, there is:

- assurance
- confidence
- direction

C. The Home of Lazarus-----Mary and Martha

1. The occasion: the family gathered (John 12) and the immediate background is John 11. In chapter 11 we see the relationships set in order in the family and something of the care of the home for the Lord Jesus. In the more distant background is John 10:38.
2. Notice the inter-relationship in matters of worship and service. How do these compare/contrast in showing the Lord is welcome.
3. Observations:
  - a. familiarity
  - b. understanding
  - c. order.

D. And in Contrast, to some Degree....the Home of Simon the Pharisee as noted in Luke 7.

1. The character and goals of the Pharisees in general with some notes on particular individuals.
2. The invitation (Luke 7:36). cf. Matthew 26:8
3. The welcome: Luke 7:44-46
4. A study in contrast and the obvious implications
5. A lesson: Where the Lord is welcome there is thanksgiving, blessing and forgiveness. A home that honors the Lord does not just happen, it is developed.

E. A Few Practical Observations.....

1. Our homes will be honoring to the Lord when He is welcome to them and His presence cherished. To this end....
  - a. We should welcome His guidance and trust in His Word
  - b. We should worship and serve together
  - c. We should keep our lives open before Him and His will
2. When He is welcome He is honored....when He is received grudgingly or hesitantly it is a different case.



3. And there must be more discussion or ideas from the class that can be mentioned here:

### **III. Homes Where God's People Are Nourished**

#### **A. Defining the Concept**

"God's People" is a term to identify or define those who belong to God in the personal sense of being born into His family through saving faith as related to this age. Historically "God's People" were the people of Israel and in a theological sense that is still true. But for the present discussion we are using the term to speak of the church or the family of believers. We are not referring to a particular class or bracket of them but to the whole of the company without regard to prominence in service or personal achievements. They are, as a body, a distinct class but within that class there is no discriminatory standard that makes one more important than another or puts one closer to the heart of God. There are distinctions in service, but not in worth or eternal value. Well, the more I discuss it the more complicated it becomes so we will just drop it at this point and trust to the discretion of our class members.

By "nourishing" we mean the gracious care, hospitality and thoughtfulness that should mark the church of God. The home is the essential institution behind all of the other social orders and it is to this area that one should look for the fellowship of life. It is not always found there, however, but when it is we describe it as a home that honor God for.."as much as ye have done it unto the least of these..."(Mt. 25:41-36)

Quality, not quantity, is the matter at stake. I will try to put this into a better total perspective, however, so don't get nervous about the discussion until we are done!

B. The Home of Aquila and Priscilla (and you may spell them as you will!)

1. Identification
2. Their service to Paul (Acts 18)
  - a. Acts 18:3
  - b. Acts 18:18
  - c. Romans 16:3-5
  - d. 1 Corinthians 16:19
  - e. 2 Timothy 4:19
3. Their service to Apollos
  - a. Who was he and what did he do?
  - b. Acts 18:24
  - c. The extent of their ministry of love beyond the immediate scene,.

C. The Shunnamite Household: 2 Kings 4:8 ff

1. The Historical Setting
2. Prophets: Elijah and Elisha
3. Acts of kindness: 4:8-10
4. Promised blessing 4:16
5. Catastrophe 4:18
6. A call for help. 4:24-29
7. Intervention (Divine) 4:35
8. General Lesson: Where God's people are nourished the blessing of God is witnessed and God is honored.

D. But, in contrast, the Home of Nabal and Abigail, 2 Samuel 25

1. The Historical account....2 Samuel 25 and background
2. David's request based on his previous service and the response of Nabal (whose name means "fool" or "stupid person")

3. The planned action in the face of inhospitable treatment
4. Abigail's quick action and in the long run we see again that a divided house cannot stand.

E. Some Summary Notes

1. To enable our homes to honor God through the simple acts of nourishing His people, we may consider the following:

- a. Be hospitable
- b. Love the Brotherhood
- c. Do Good to all People--as much as
- d. Don't be weary in dwell doing

(and you might see if you can find some Scriptures that support these suggested steps in nourishment)

2. It is important to remember that the God honoring homes are not perfect! They are yielded and concerned and in those areas provide lessons and encouragement for us...so---

#### **IV. Homes Where the Order prescribed by God is Respected.**

A. Defining the Concept

The concept of family or home was created by God at the close of His creation activity. The order instituted by God was soon corrupted by the sin of our "first parents" and very soon thereafter by the behavior of their children. The ongoing family status would see the development of polygamy and many things not in the original plan but fabricated in the lives of people. If one wonders why God allowed it...the answer is simply that God set in order an establishment of life and gave mankind the capacity to maintain it. He did not create robots in that degree. God did not act as a "big brother" or a "policeman" and while He offered grace to those who would receive it, He permitted disbelief in His codes. But there has always been a special place for the homes that took the order of God seriously and lived it. These are homes that honor God and while



D. In Summary, the Home that Honors the Order of God, Honors God

1. It accepts the authority of God's Word
2. It seeks to carry out the instruction of God
3. It directs family affairs in harmony with the word of God ( I will ramble a bit on this and try to show how we have arranged these affairs for our own agenda.)
4. It demonstrates the wisdom and direction of God through the life decisions and practical values it establishes.

E. A Contrary Example: the Home of Isaac and Rebecca

1. As a preliminary note...please understand that we are going to look at one facet of their home life. No doubt they honored the Lord for much of their journey together. But they came to a point where the order given by God meant --almost nothing! Disaster followed affecting the whole family. So we are not going to "bash" them, but to instruct ourselves from this time when God was not honored.
2. The Setting: Genesis 25:19 ff
  - a. The problem and the answer
  - b. Children!
    - (1) Twins, v 23
    - (2) A prediction, 23
    - (3) Birth!
    - (4) The respective characters.
  - c. Keep in mind the attitude of the parents to the known will of God and to the determined nature of the children.
3. The family bequests: The birthright and the blessing. Long general discussion from the teacher follows. I will not outline it here but will leave you a small section for comments you might like to write.

4. Complications:

- a. Esau's wife
- b. Family Chicanery
- c. Sibling relationships
- d. Both parents lose out
- e. Both children suffer in their own degree.

5. Summarizing the negative account where the order of God was not honored:

- a. God was not trusted
- b. Partners were not trusted
- c. Sibling rivalry furthered by parental interference
- d. Mother's hope is lost
- e. Father's state confused
- f. Children have learned the wrong lesson(s).

E. Summary and Conclusion:

The home that accepts the order of God both honors Him and its own destiny. Practical trust and obedience....these enforce the answers. But there are a lot of questions....

What if one partner wants to honor the order and the other does not?

What is a person just lives alone?

How long is the command to honor to be in effect?

How are family offenses to be resolved?

And...well there are a lot more and if you wish to ask about any or to add to this list....we will take some time to do it. But remember this is not a clinic so keep the questions general rather than personal.



## V. Homes Where God's Service is Basic

### A. Defining the Concept:

This is an ideal and one for which we might all strive....a home where the serving of God is basic to whatever else is done. His testimony is more important than things, social engagements, demographic considerations, etc. No attempt by us will be perfect in this area but an honest effort can go a long way with prayer and the guidance of the Scripture. The key is to learn to think of God first and how the Divine intentions may be fulfilled through us. A home with this concept in practice will certainly be one that honors the Lord because....it has given Him the place or pre-eminence and authority. Of the several homes in the Scripture that may be selected, three have been selected.

### B. The Home of Philemon

1. The Philemon Story, summarized, against the content of the letter written to him by Paul.
  - a. Paul in prison
  - b. The runaway slave
  - c. A conversion experience
  - d. An opportunity for redress
  - e. Paul's asking for a personal favor.
2. Philemon's contribution to the testimony: a case where the work of God is basic.
  - a. his character, vs. 1
  - b. his family, vs 2
  - c. his house, vs 3
  - d. his service, vs 7
  - e. his performance, vs 21
3. His home was used as a witnessing point probably more than anything else. The serving of God seems to have dominated his life and this does not make one a social liability but does render one very useful to the Lord and His people. Many of us do not have the possessions and position of Philemon but it would be a great honor to God if we took a similar view with regard to what we have.

C. The House of Jason: Acts 17:1-9

1. This is a limited example and there are several similar ones in Acts (limited meaning we do not have a lot of material) and this one seems typical.
2. Note in the text that he was willing to hazard all for the promotion of the Gospel. See how he accorded help to the Apostles:
  - a. He received them
  - b. He sheltered them
  - c. He went bond for them!
3. The point is that Jason valued the testimony and service of God even if such action was detrimental to his personal affairs.

D. The House of Mary--Mother of John Mark.

There are not many references but I thought those we have are of sufficient interest to see them.

1. Hers was a house of fellowship (10:12)
2. Hers was a house of prayer (12:25)
3. Hers was a house of help (Romans 16:6)

E. A Contrary Case: the Home of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

1. The Situation
2. The plot
3. Judgment
4. Collusion
5. Result

F. Summary and Conclusion

God's service is basic in this case and the following items should be given careful consideration:

1. Prayer
2. Use of Resources
3. Encouragement of Witness
4. Actual Testimony

## **VI. Homes where the Witness of the Gospel is Continued Generation to Generation**

### **A. Defining the Concept:**

The matter and importance of witness has often been mentioned in our work. In this case we want to stress how the truth should be passed from generation to generation---from parents to children.

That this is an important matter is seen in the Old Testament in passages such as Deuteronomy 6. The passing of truth in a family sequence is emphatic in the book of Proverbs and there are numerous points in this direction in the New Testament. One would think it would be the easiest and most natural way for transmission of truth. But it seems not to be. Our point is not to find fault but to encourage ourselves to see that our homes honor God in the passing of truth from age to age--from one level of the family to successive levels.

### **B. The Home of Timothy**

1. We meet him in Acts 16 and learn a little of his home--a culturally mixed setting---in 16:1-3. We find him in Acts 19:22 ministering in Macedonia and reference is made to him and his faithful ministry four times in the New Testament besides the books written to him and bearing his name. He was a faithful servant and one of the more influential New Testament witnesses.
2. Of his early home we have a key reference in 2 Timothy 1:5. This is reinforced by the note in 2 Timothy 3:15....he had been exposed to the Scriptures since he was a baby!
3. Following his parental guidance he is taught by Paul how to continue this witness in 2 Timothy 2:2.



4. This home is marked by Bible teaching, attention to spiritual duty, and a personal promotion of the faith believed.

C. The House of Samuel: 1 Samuel 1-3

1. The account
2. The Home
  - a. His parents 1:1
  - b. His family circumstance 1:2
  - c. The Petition and a Promise
  - d. The home, brief, is marked by these things:
    - (1) a dedicated mother
    - (2) an understanding father
    - (3) a committed couple
    - (4) an obedient child
3. The result: Samuel becomes a well-trained and disciplined servant. We do not know of the other family members but here is a case where the faith is committed from parents to child for the continuance of the testimony.

D. A Negative Home Illustration: Gideon's Home: Judges 6-9

1. His life is fascinating and we cannot take it up in detail in this study. We can note some of the things about the home from which he came and the home he established.
2. His father's home: the idol and Gideon's service...Judges 6
3. His career: Judges 7-8
4. His great mistake: 8:27
5. His progeny: 9:1 ff

You will see a complete disregard for truth and the law of God on the part of the son who succeeds him in his prominence. There are many examples like this in the Old Testament and we can neither be judges nor personal critics. We have our own homes and responsibilities:

E. Conclusion and Summary

It is a matter that needs a lot of thought--not so much in retrospect as in prospect. It is never too late, however, to apply the general principles and make sure that God is welcome in the Home, His people are nourished in the Home, the order He established is practiced in the Home, the importance of His truth is Basic in the Home, and the continuation of testimony should be a goal in the Home. God is honored in the institution of these things. And incidentally....most of us do not fulfill them all so we do not teach a totality of perfection but a growth in yieldedness to the Divine will and commitment to the Word of God.

## **VII. Conclusion to this Study:**

We will put it together with your help! Thanks for being with us in our thinking of these things.