

Homework – 1
Joshua 24:14-15
“What about Your House?”

Outline:

1. WHERE A GODLY HOME INITIATES
 - A. a humble reverence for God
 - B. a heartfelt resolution for God
2. WHAT A GODLY HOME INVOLVES
 - A. a life of separation
 - B. a life of service
3. WHO A GODLY HOME INCLUDES
 - A. a comprehensive effort
 - B. a continual effort

1. In just a little over fifty years, the television portrayal of the family went from Ozzie and Harriet Nelson to Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne. The Nelson's portrayed a peaceful, benign, if not a little *too* perfect image of the home.

2. On the other hand, the Osbourne's presented a permissive, profane, and toxic household, where the parents were as immature as the children, and the whole family was in desperate need of therapy.

3. If there is such a thing as the typical American family, it probably falls somewhere between the innocence of the Nelson's and the insanity of the Osbourne's.

4. For those who belong to Jesus Christ, the true standard for the family is not dictated by Hollywood, the media, or some preconceived notion of a typical American family.

5. For the truly Christian family, the Word of God alone provides the plan and parameters for what a home and a family should be. The Scriptures, not society, sets the standards for how husbands and wives, moms and dads, parents and children are supposed to live and interact.

6. This year, over 1 million kids will watch their parents go through a divorce.¹ The tragedy of this is that those millions of children are forever handicapped by the breakdown of their home.

7. Children from divorced homes are 70% more likely to be expelled or suspended from school. Sarah McLanahan of Princeton University found among other things, that girls growing up in single-parent homes are 164% more likely to

have a child out of wedlock, and 92% more likely to become divorced after they do get married than girls who grow up in a two-parent home.

8. Kids not living with one of their biological parents are anywhere from 50 to 150% more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs than their peers who live with both of their biological parents.ⁱⁱ On and on the statistics and the studies tell the toll that the breakdown of the family has taken on our kids and our society.

10. Unfortunately, the crumbling of the family has not been escaped by the church. The statistics on divorce are virtually identical among churchgoers as they are among those with no church affiliation.

11. That fact is both sad and alarming. We must begin again to build godly, holy, Christ-honoring families within the household of faith. Those of us who claim the name of Christ must begin again to do our “homework”, and strengthen our families for the sake of our future.

12. As Joshua neared the end of his life, he stood before the children of Israel one final time as their beloved leader. His farewell speech is recorded in Joshua 23 and 24.

13. Toward the close of his speech, Joshua issued a challenge. He said in verse 15, “...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.”

16. I want to take the words of Joshua’s challenge, and I want to speak to you today about your families and your homes, and I want to ask the question, “What about your house?”

17. From the words of Israel’s great general, we find three truths that speak to us about building and maintaining godly, strong, Christ-honoring homes. Notice these three truths with me. Notice first of all:

I. WHERE A GODLY HOME INITIATES

1. Godly homes are not accidents. They are not flukes or glitches. Godly homes happen for a reason. The home that is strong can be traced back to a clear and definite beginning.

2. In Joshua’s final speech to Israel, he pointed them to the things that initiate holy households and godly homes. I want you to notice a couple of things that Joshua indicates as starting points for godly homes.

3. Notice first of all that, a godly home begins with:

A. A humble reverence for God

1. Look again at our text, and notice verse 14. Joshua says, “Now therefore fear the Lord...” Though fear and reverence for God seems to be a forgotten teaching in our day, it is still a principle that literally permeates the Bible.
2. Psalm 34:11 says, “Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.” Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”
3. If you take the time to do it, as you go through the Bible you will find that on nearly every page there is some reference to the subject of fearing the Lord.
4. To fear the Lord is to have reverence for who He is and what He can do. Those who know the holiness of God, and the power of God, should live in humble reverence of those awesome truths.
5. A godly home begins when a husband and wife, a mom and dad, figure out that the God of the Bible is not some distant, cosmic, grandfather you only have to visit once a week.
6. A godly home starts when the members of a family realize that Jesus Christ is not some ancient martyr, but is in fact the resurrected King of the Universe, who calls human beings to bow their knees to His Lordship.
7. The family that does not fear God will not serve God! The home that does not reverence God’s commands for marriage, and does not fearfully acknowledge Christ’s authority over the family, will not be a holy, godly, biblical home.
8. Notice something further about where a godly home initiates. It begins not only with a humble reverence for God, but notice also that it starts with:

B. A heartfelt resolution for God

1. Look again at this text, and notice Joshua’s words in verse 15. He pushed the people towards a decision. He said to them, “...choose you this day whom ye will serve...”
2. Note that word “choose”. It is translated from a word that always speaks of a careful, and well thought-out choice. In nearly every instance that this word is used in the Bible, it describes a choice that has ultimate and eternal significance.
3. As I said earlier, godly families do not happen on accident or by default. Unless a family makes a sincere, heartfelt, ultimate decision to be a godly, Christ-honoring family, they will not be so.

4. If you as a partner in a marriage or a parent in a family have never resolved to seek God and serve him in your home, why would you expect that somehow your family would just miraculously become godly?

5. Before I was ever born, Ken and Sherry Trivette, as young teenagers committed their lives to Christ and devoted themselves to living for Him. When I came along, I was born into a family that had already decided to be a godly, Christ-honoring home.

6. It was not a perfect home, but I never questioned or wondered which direction we were trying to go as a family. I never woke up on Sunday morning and wondered if we were going to church that day.

7. I never worried about whether or not mom or dad might leave and not come back. I never felt like it was alright to live any old way I chose while under that roof. You see, though I wasn't there when it happened; I knew that somewhere the decision to live for God as a family had already been made.

8. I wonder; has there ever been a time in the life of your family when you made a conscious, purposeful decision to strive to be a godly, holy household? Has there ever been a day when you chose whether or not your family would serve the living God?

9. Notice a second truth we draw from this text. Here we see not only *where a godly home initiates*, but notice also secondly that we see:

II. WHAT A GODLY HOME INVOLVES

1. Notice again Joshua's challenge to the people. He says to them in verse 15, "...choose you this day whom ye will serve..." Notice carefully that Joshua did not say, "Choose you this day whether or not you will go to church."

2. I point that out because I feel that one of the problems with our families today is that we have foolishly believed that attending church once or twice a week is what makes for a Christian home. But I would say to you, that while the godly family will go to church, that is not the real secret behind their godliness.

3. Sitting together in the church does not mean that your family is living together for Christ. There is more involved in being a godly family than just being a church family.

4. So what does a godly home involve? Joshua points us to a couple of principles. First of all, a godly home involves:

A. A life of separation

1. Look back at verse 14. Joshua says, “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.”

2. Notice that phrase “put away the gods which your fathers served.” In verse 15, Joshua tells the people that in order to serve God, they must choose Him over the gods of the people of the land where they lived.

3. In other words, Joshua said that in order for these families to serve the living and true God, they had to separate themselves from the other gods that were worshipped by other people.

4. In our day today, worshipping the gods of Canaan is not a particular problem, but that does not mean that we do not have our own modern day idols and false gods.

5. America is full of idol worshippers. People worship the god of sports, the god of money, the god of possessions, the god leisure and recreation, and a whole host of other false gods.

6. What you and I must realize is that our families cannot continue to drink the wine of this culture, and digest the constant flow of godless, mindless media that is offered on television and the internet and still be able to worship God in spirit and in truth.

7. Somewhere, Christian families have got to draw the line and separate themselves from the increasing sinfulness and wickedness of this world if we are ever going to serve God the way He demands and desires.

8. In II Corinthians 6:16, Paul asks, “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” He goes on to say, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate...”

9. No family can participate in the sins of their culture and serve their Christ at the same time. A godly home involves a life of separation. Notice also further that a godly home involves:

B. A life of service

1. There is a word that is all over this text. It is the word serve. In two verses, the word serve, or served appears seven times. In each case, it has the same meaning.

2. The word “serve” is translated from a Hebrew word that always carries the idea of working and labor. It comes from a root word that means to obey.
3. Notice that Joshua does not say, “...choose *if* you will serve...”, but rather, “...choose *Whom* you will serve...” The indication is that everyone will serve something or someone. Everyone will work for, and obey something or someone.
4. Ask yourself this question, “Who or what is my family serving?” The way to find out the answer to that question is to figure out where the majority of your family’s time is spent.
5. Does your family spend the majority of their time at ball fields and gyms? Does your family spend the majority of their time in front of the TV, or on the computer?
6. A godly home will organize its time so that the things of God get more attention, and more “service” than anything else. A godly home requires a life of service to God.
7. Several years ago, a research project was headed by a professor from the University of Nebraska. The project was an effort to discover what made for a strong family. The research team interviewed and observed three-thousand different families from South America, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, South Africa, and the United States.
8. At the end of their study, they concluded that there were six common qualities of a strong family. They are:
 1. Family members are committed to the family
 2. They spend time together
 3. They have good communication
 4. They express appreciation to each other
 5. They have a spiritual commitment
 6. They are able to solve problems in a crisis
9. If you think about those six qualities, you will realize that all of them are plainly instructed and laid out within the Word of God. Is that just a coincidence? No, the reality is that godly homes are not accidental; they involve a life of obedient service to God and His Word.
10. Notice one more truth about godly homes that we draw from this text. Notice not only *where a godly home initiates*, and *what a godly home involves*, but notice also thirdly and finally:

III. WHO A GODLY HOME INCLUDES

1. Look again at Joshua's words in verse 15. He says, "...choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

2. Notice that Joshua included his entire household in his decision to serve the Lord. It was not enough for Joshua himself to commit to serve the Lord. His family would have to join him in this pursuit.

3. Joshua reminds us of the importance of a unified, inclusive effort in the work of building a godly home. Notice a couple of things about this inclusive effort. Notice first of all that:

A. This is a comprehensive effort

1. Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord..." Notice that pronoun *we*. Joshua intended that not only he, but his wife, and his kids, and his grandkids would all be involved in living for God.

2. Unfortunately, I see far too many couples and families that have only one member who is serious about living for God.

3. I see wives in love with Jesus, who are married to men who are in love with themselves and their grown-up toys. I see men who want to serve Christ, but are married to wives who want to live in the world, and pursue its pleasures.

4. I see teenagers who are passionate for God, but whose parents care more about work than they do their souls. Too often families are crippled from being all they could be for God because not everyone in the family is submitted to Christ.

5. A truly godly home includes the whole family! The spiritually lazy, childish husbands need to quit putting everything in the world before God, and he needs to grow up, step up, and hold his wife's hand as he leads his family in following Christ!

6. Some of the carnal, worldly women need to quit trying to live like the Jezebels they see on TV, and they need to start supporting their husbands, and loving their children for Christ's sake.

7. Some of our parents need to quit ruining their children's lives by letting them have and do everything they want, and they need to start teaching them the Word of God, and pointing them to Christ before they grow up to become pagans who never darken a church door again.

8. Joshua said, "Me and my house are going to serve the Lord." He understood that a godly home is a comprehensive effort that includes every single member of the family!

9. Notice something else about who a godly family includes. Notice not only that this is a comprehensive effort, but notice also that:

B. This is a continual effort

1. I want you to look in your Bibles, and drop down from our text, and notice verse 29. There we read, "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old."

2. Even if his death took place several years after his final speech, that means that Joshua was around 100 years old when he said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

3. Joshua had determined that as long as he lived, his would be a family that lived for God, and served him with their lives.

4. There are some families who at one time served the Lord, but have now gone back to serving the gods of this world. There was a day when the whole family lived for Christ; but now they live for other things.

5. Creating a godly home is not something that happens over night. It is a continual, committed effort on the part of the entire family to be what God calls them to be until He calls them home.

6. A little girl was sitting on some luggage in a hotel lobby. A lady began to talk to her and she asked, "Is your family here visiting someone?" The little girl said, "No, we are going to have to live in this hotel until we can find a house to live in. My daddy got a new job and we just moved here." The lady said, "Oh, its too bad you don't have a home." The little girl quickly responded, "Oh, we have a home – we just don't have a house to put it in."

7. You can build a house in a few months, but it takes a continual effort to build a home to live in that house. Joshua reminds us that a godly home is one that includes every member of the family.

1. There is no such thing as the perfect home. No marriage is a perfect match, no parent always gets it right, and no kid ever lives without at least once breaking his parent's heart.

2. While there is no such thing as a perfect home, there is such a thing as a godly home. Godly homes are built by families who decide that they are going to live for God, and serve the Lord Jesus to the best of their abilities.

3. Godly homes have moms and dads who love one another, and train up their children to fear God and please Him with their lives.

4. Godly homes are built by imperfect people who know a perfect Savior, and who live by His grace in humble obedience to Him. Godly homes are increasingly rare, but desperately needed.

5. What about your house? Joshua determined that as for His house, they would serve the Lord. What about yours? Will your home be a godly home? Only you can decide that.

6. I believe that if we will commit as families to do our homework, and to give heed to the Word of God and what it says about our family relationships, we can build a church family that is full of families that honor Christ!

7. What about your house? Will you serve the Lord?

ⁱ Dexter, Penna, Lessons from the divorce generation, 5/6/08, *erlc.com* article, accessed 2/27/09, <http://erlc.com/article/lessons-from-the-divorce-generation/>

ⁱⁱ Stanton, Glenn T., Why Marriage Matters for Children, *Focus on the Family's Issue Analysis*, accessed 2/27/09, <http://www.citizenlink.org/FOSI/marriage/marriage/A000000982.cfm>