

Promises for the Family

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. 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. (Psalms 127:3-5)

The great responsibility given to parents in rearing their children to be faithful to God is seen in the verses above. Children are shaped and guided by their parents, and when the word of God is instilled within these children they will be able to stand against the enemy and boldly defend the word. What a great joy it is to have your children walking in the light!

When we think about these concepts as presented in God's word, we are faced with a quandary. How do we keep our families faithful to God? There are so many temptations that our families face and often succumb to. It seems to be getting harder and harder to ward off the Devil. How do we win in the face of such great odds against us?

Often, parents try to guide their families in their own way, without using God's word as their guide book. They, therefore, leave out the one tool that gives them all they need to overcome the Devil. They miss out on the encouraging words from God and the great examples we have of godly men and women. They do not see the great promises God has given us for the family.

It helps us to remember that we are

not in this alone. While all others may forsake us, God never will (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5). With God on our side, we can conquer the world and have the great blessings that come from God, both in this world and the world to come (Romans 8:37).

What has God told us about the home? What promises has he made for us? What lessons do we need to take to heart? What things do we need to change in our lives so we can have the homes God wants us to have? We need to consider these things seriously!

God desires the home to be the bastion of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This will come when fathers bring up their children in the way of God (Ephesians 6:4) and mothers instill their faith in God in their children (2 Timothy 1:5). In order to have homes where God rules the house, husbands and wives must live in keeping with God's word (Ephesians 5:22-33), and they must never let the world break up their home (Matthew 19:6). The Bible must be the most precious book in the home – the guidebook by which all disputes are settled and all questions answered.

A careful look at the Bible shows that God has always promised great blessings for the home if the home walks in his way. Deuteronomy 4:40 offers three blessings: (1) *“that it may go well with thee”*; (2) *“and with thy children after thee”*; and, (3) *“that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth”*. The children of Israel understood that not only were their lives affected by what they chose to do, but also the lives of their children. What did God teach them would bring about these great

blessings? *“Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments”*.

Children can have these same blessings by the things which they choose to do. They can have good lives and prolong their days on Earth by the decisions they make. What must they do to have these blessings? They must obey their parents and honor their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). What are children to do? They are to subject themselves to their parents and hold their parents in high esteem, to prize their parents.

Our lives affect everyone around us, our families especially. It is so important that we realize the effect our example and our words have on others. Children imitate their parents, and their moods are affected by the moods of their parents. Husbands affect the lives of their wives. Wives affect the lives of their husbands. Both parents set the ground work for the rest of the lives of their children. If the foundation is bad, do not be surprised when the children go astray. The Bible has ever taught us to train up our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). When they are older, they will not stray from the path. The just man who walks in his integrity will give much to his children – *“his children are blessed after him”* (Proverbs 20:7).

Considering that great blessings come to the home because we walk in the light of God (1 John 1:7), are there things we need to change in our homes so we can guide the home in the right way. Here are some things that should be in our thinking. If they are not, then we need to change our lives. (1) Never

underestimate the power of the Devil – 2 Corinthians 2:11. If we believe our children are safe from the Devil, then we will let our guard down and the Devil will snatch them away from us. The same is true of our wives and husbands, and each of us individually. (2) Resist the Devil – James 4:7. Do not invite the Devil into your house whether it is via the internet, movies, television, books, or any other way. Things which are contrary to God's will are not welcome in our homes and are kept away from our families. These things only lead to destruction and never to up-building. We must fight the Devil and exhort our families (1 Timothy 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:3ff). (3) Protect your home from the influence of evil companions (1 Corinthians 15:33; Proverbs 13:20). Many a home has been destroyed by the influence of the wrong type of people. Surround your home with godly men and women who will help all in the home go to Heaven. (4) Put in play in the home right thinking. Each person must think correctly. The thoughts of the home that are to be instilled in all are those things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Philippians 4:8). Now, we ask again, "Are there changes that need to be made in your home?"

Homes do not have to fall apart. Homes do not have to be filled with troubles and instability. Homes do not have to be a discouragement to any. Our homes can be those from which the light shines that will bring hope to this world. What our homes are will come about by whether we choose to do

those things which will bring great blessings to our home. God has promised us good lives, longer days on the Earth, and blessings for our children after us if we only will obey God and keep his commandments.

The home that walks with God will be able to have much influence for good upon the world around it. It can change a nation and strengthen a congregation of God's people. It can be that which is not only a blessing to those in the home, but to all those who come in contact with it. This can happen if we do those things which will bring God's promises on our homes. If God be for us, none can stand against us (Romans 8:31).

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring on Abraham that which he hath spoken of him (Genesis 18:19)

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the 27th Annual Mid-West Lectures, "God's Precious Promises." To hear or view the complete lesson go to www.kc-cofc.org/2009Lectures.htm or contact the 39th Street Church of Christ 15331 East 39th Street Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA

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