

“FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS”
by C. L. “Vern” Wilson

“FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS”

Gospel Meeting at Mack Road, Sacramento, California

1- Relationships

Colossians 3:1-25

INTRODUCTION:

By definition, “relationships” means: **1.** The condition or fact of being related; connection or association. **2.** Connection by blood or marriage; kinship. **3.** A particular type of connection existing between people related to or having dealings with each other: *has a close relationship with his siblings.* ALSO, it is “*interaction between two entities.*” It includes and involves the thoughts of “*cooperation*” and “*fellowship*” and “*associations*” and carries the ideas of **alliance connection dependence.** It’s really the “**dependence**” that triggers our responsibility, because we must be aware that *when others are depending on us for godly actions* that (*as much as in us is*) WE ARE DEBTORS!

Our primary purpose in this initial lesson in the series is to set some truths before you regarding relationships, some of which may have some variables for you to contemplate during the week as we pursue the lessons that have been planned and designed to help us each better understand our associations under God, and how to acceptably fulfill our responsibilities in those connections. So, as we study this chapter there are three things to be aware of in each of the relationships suggested:

1. WHO are the PARTIES involved in the relationship?

2. WHAT is their alliance or connection? [HOW or WHY did they become debtors to each other? viz, what CAUSED their relationship?]

3. WHAT is their interdependence? [In other words, what is it that keeps them tied together?]

I. Col.3:1-17: Relationship between Christ and those Risen with Him.

A. WHO are the PARTIES involved in this relationship?

1. Does GOD have any part in this relationship? **Eph.1:3-14; Rom.8:28-32;**

a) If God loved ALL the world, and gave His Son for the salvation of ALL, how can anyone say that ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD do not sustain the same relationship to the Lord?

Jno.3:16; Rom.5:8-9.

1) IF THERE ARE RESTRICTIONS, then WHO set them, and by what authority?

2) This is a KEY THOUGHT to understanding the expanse and limitations of the grace of God. **Eph.2:5, 8-9; Gal.1:6, 15** (have to be CALLED into grace); **Titus 2:11-12;** cf.

2 Thes.2:14.

3) All of the plans and prophecies and revelations of God through the ages regarding His eternal SCHEME OF REDEMPTION are set forth to deal with the answer to just this question! cf. **Acts 17:24-28.**

b) SO, with WHOM is God in relationship, and HOW? [*God is in relationship WITH ALL WHO HAVE “CALLED UPON HIS NAME TO BE SAVED” IN and BY and THRU HIS SON J.C.---Rom.10:13; Jno.14:6.*]

2. The other part of the relationship is MAN, as attested to by the scope of the commission (**Mk.16:15**), and those who responded to it! cf. **Acts 2:36-42, 47.**

B. WHAT is their alliance or connection [HOW or WHY did they (the Lord & men) become debtors to each other? viz, what CAUSED their relationship?]

1. GOD IS the cause: **Titus 1:1-3; Eph.1:4; Gal.4:4-6**

2. CHRIST EFFECTED the cause: **Matt.16:18; Jno.10:17-18; Heb.1:1-3a;**

3. The HOLY SPIRIT PROMULGATED the cause: **Jno.16:13; 6:63;**

4. MAN’s responsibility is to RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY to the cause! **Rom.1:16-17; 6:17-18; 2 Thes.2:14; Rom.10:16.**

C. WHAT is their interdependence? [What is it that keeps them tied together?]

1. Are further actions involved? [Are there any continuing responsibilities?]

a) Of Christ? If so, WHAT? Cf. **Rom.8:35-39; 1 Cor.10:13; Matt.28:20; 18:20.**

b) Of Those Risen? If so, WHAT? **Text; Matt.5:16; Phil.4:4-8; Eph.4:1-6.**

2. What can/should you call this relationship?

3. Can this relationship be violated or ruptured? Explain. *Can it be done so permanently?*

II. Col.3:18-19: Relationship between Husbands and Wives.

A. WHO are the PARTIES involved in this relationship?

1. Is the Lord involved in a physical HOME relationship?

a) Sometimes have seen little sign when visiting in the home of seemingly godly people: “*Christ is the head of this house.*”

b) Is Christ the “head of your home?” If not, who is? Please be able to explain your answer.

c) What’s it mean to be the “head of the house?”

2. The HUSBAND of the family unit is specifically involved in this relationship.

a) “*For the husband is the head of the wife...*” **Eph.5:23.** What AUTHORITY does this give the husband in the home?

b) Is this physical power? Mental power? Spiritual power? Please explain.

3. The WIFE, also, cannot be left out as a part of this relationship.

a) The wife is to be taught to be a “keeper at home...” **Titus 2:5 (KJV)**. What AUTHORITY does this give the wife in the home?

b) How do you coincide the two?

4. What about a FRACTURED family? [Single parents: death/ divorce/ abandonment/ etc.]

B. WHAT is their alliance or connection [HOW or WHY did they become debtors to each other? viz., what CAUSED their relationship?]

1. The relationship is primarily based on an association by CHOICE. At least we in this country usually have the prerogative to make our choice regarding our home companion.

2. But it is ALSO initiated and sustained by LAW, both GOD’S LAW and CIVIL LAW!

a) In the mind of one who desires to serve God, it takes compliance with BOTH LAWS to make a marriage.

1) Right on the civil license issued by the county it states the law that a ceremony must be performed for it to be valid.

2) According to God’s law each man is to have his own wife and each woman her own husband. GOD’S LAW does NOT permit two men or two women to get married! Also, God’s law states that a man & woman who just start cohabiting are fornicators.

b) We do not have the right to arbitrarily invalidate God’s laws for our own convenience!

C. WHAT is their interdependence? [What keeps them tied together?]

1. Personal needs or fear or ignorance or children or family or friends or just simple economics, etc.

2. Positively, an actual interdependence, based on a LOVING CARE for one another, manifesting a need for one another to sustain & be sustained **emotionally** [includes all such as loneliness, ego, servitude, having someone who cares, etc.], **socially, intellectually, financially, sexually, etc.**

3. But for God-loving and scripture-believing people, **it is the COVENANT RELATIONSHIP of Marriage! Mal.2:14-** “*Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ [does the Lord not accept my sacrifice] Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.*”

III. Col.3:20-21: Relationship between Parents and Children.

A. WHO are the PARTIES involved in this relationship?

1. Those who have been born into this world along with their parents.

a) Would GOD be involved in **this type** of HOME relationship?

b) Give the **WHY?** for your answer!

2. Is it only the children of the particular parents involved?

a) Relationships can also be initiated by adoption and in foster homes as well as perhaps other ways. [Caring for deceased relative’s children.]

b) ALL RELATIONSHIPS have laws that control the involvements: natural laws, biological laws, civil laws, et al. [If we can understand this point here, why not when it’s involving a relationship with Jesus Christ?]

B. WHAT is their alliance or connection: [HOW or WHY did they become debtors to each other? Viz., what CAUSED their relationship?]

1. Unfortunately, in too many cases it’s just biological accidents. Unmarried people who have children, or cheating spouses, or philandering fornicators [**phi-lan-der-ing**, **1**. To carry on a sexual affair, especially an extramarital affair, with a woman one cannot or does not intend to marry. **2**. To engage in many love affairs, especially with a frivolous or casual attitude.

2. PRIMARILY, the laws of God sets the responsibilities parents have to their children, including extended charges, as well as what’s owed by children to their parents.

C. WHAT is their interdependence? [What keeps them tied together?]

1. How or why do parents continue to be dependent on their children?

a) Natural instincts, love, fulfillment, commitment, satisfaction of accomplishment in forming and training, purpose of life, etc.

b) Sometimes, unlawfully, it’s for “free” labor, feelings of power and authority, etc.

2. How or why do the children continue to be dependent on their parents?

a) It starts out as a natural process and proceeds to loving, clinging, relying, adhering, et al.

b) It’s in keeping with the law of God, but often leads to those things which are NOT spiritually lawful: selfishness, greed, acquisitiveness, etc.

IV. Col.3:22-25: Relationship between Masters and Slaves.

A. WHO are the PARTIES involved in this relationship? Do you suppose that GOD is actually involved in THIS?

1. **MASTER:** Scripture uses master in two basic senses: (1) one in authority and (2) teacher. 1. As one in authority, master applies to slaveholders and to heads of households (which in biblical times frequently included slaves or servants). Greek terms translated **master** (of servants or a household) include *despotes*, *kyrios*, *oikodespotes* (**Mark 13:35; Luke 13:25; 14:21; 16:13;**

Eph. 6:9).

2. **SLAVE:** Does God teach AGAINST the “Master / Slave” relationship?

B. WHAT is their alliance or connection [HOW or WHY did they become debtors to each other? Viz., what CAUSED their relationship?]

This point is completely nebulous in our study. It’s a good study and should be pursued as you have the time and ability to do so.

C. WHAT is their interdependence? [What keeps them tied together?]

1. Laws of man as well as the laws of God. See Paul’s epistle to Philemon regarding the latter’s slave Onesimus, who had run away but was now being sent back by Paul.

2. But, MUCH MORE the laws of GOD than those of man! Attitudes toward each other as brethren.

CONCLUSION:

The PRINCIPLES regarding relationships that are set forth in this lesson are those that shall guide our study throughout this series of meetings. Relationships are vital to both our mental and spiritual well being. It is imperative that we focus our own lives toward the word of God and make sure we're pursuing a course of action that will not only sustain us here, but will lead us to that eternal life with HIM!

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2- Relationships and Responsibilities

Ezra 10:12; Eccl.12:13; Lk.17:10; Rom.15:27

INTRODUCTION:

There are three words in our vocabulary which are nearly synonymous: responsibility – obligation – duty. The first two are rarely found in most of the common versions we use, but the word "DUTY" IS TO BE FOUND, and so much so that most of us understand the implications it has regarding our servitude! **Ezra 10:12-** "Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, "That's right! As you have said, so it is our *duty* to do." **Eccl.12:13-** "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, *because this applies to every person* [KJV- 'this is the whole *duty* of man.']" **Lk.17:10-** "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'" [KJV- "which was our *duty* to do!"] **Rom.15:27-** "Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things." [KJV- "...their *duty* is also to minister unto them in carnal things."] Many of our duties [respon. or obligations] are directly related to our SERVICE TO GOD, because we have direct links with each of our relationships TO that service we owe to God! God is involved in every aspect of our lives: at home, on the road, at work or school, at play, or even while we're just talking on the phone!

I. WITH EVERY RELATIONSHIP COMES A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A. There is NO worthwhile, profitable relationship which does not require a RESPONSIBLE EFFORT, which is normally the fulfillment of an OBLIGATION!

1. **ob·li·ga·tion** (ob'li-ga'sh.n) *noun*

1. The act of binding oneself by a social, legal, or moral tie.

2. **a.** A social, legal, or moral requirement, such as a duty, contract, or promise that compels one to follow or avoid a particular course of action. **b.** A course of action imposed by society, law, or conscience by which one is bound or restricted.

3. The constraining power of a promise, contract, law, or sense of duty.

4. **Law.** **a.** A legal agreement stipulating a specified payment or action, especially if the agreement also specifies a penalty for failure to comply. **b.** The document containing the terms of such an agreement.

5. **a.** Something owed as payment or in return for a special service or favor. **b.** The service or favor for which one is indebted to another.

6. The state, fact, or feeling of being indebted to another for a special service or favor received.

— **ob·li·ga·tion·al** *adjective*

2. **Synonyms:** *obligation, responsibility, duty.* These nouns refer to a course of action that is **DEMANDED** of a person, as by law or conscience.

a) **Obligation** usually applies to a specific constraint arising from a particular cause: "Then in the marriage union, the independence of the husband and wife will be equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal" (Lucretia Mott).

b) **Responsibility** stresses accountability for the fulfillment of an obligation: "I believe that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty" (John D. Rockefeller, Jr.).

c) **Duty** applies especially to constraint deriving from moral or ethical considerations: "I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies" (William Tyler Page).

B. Our purpose for this study is to focus on those **CONSTRAINTS** [**necessities** or **conditions**] which are inherent in an acceptable relationship with God, which I believe fall into two categories, both under the guise of **AUTHORITY**:

1. The **NEED TO GET INTO** a specific style of living by adhering to specified requirements. [**This calls for INITIATING a right relationship with God, and THIS requires precisely orchestrated actions on our part!**]

2. The **URGENCY FOR FOLLOWING** a proscribed [*limited, moderated, restricted*] methodology of obedience. [**Once we get into that relationship we must maintain/sustain it by a tenacious, continued adherence!**]

3. I also believe that BOTH of these speak to an **EXCLUSIVENESS OF SERVICE** in fulfilling our responsibilities to God, but in lieu of getting ahead of ourselves we'll continue to just set the principles today and make more distinct and precise applications in our next two lessons.

II. OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES [OBLIGATIONS & DUTIES] ARE A RESULT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD [AND THE SERVICE WE OWE HIM] WHICH REACHES INTO AND AFFECTS ALL FACETS OF OUR LIVES!

A. SO, the primary objective of this lesson is to focus on our **SERVICE to GOD!**

1. And what we're talking about is **OBLIGATORY** service! **NECESSARY** service! Service that is **NOT OPTIONAL!** **MANDATORY** fulfillment of duty!

2. And we are **RESPONSIBLE** to make sure that service is **ACCEPTABLE TO GOD!**

B. BUT, *what does it mean* to be responsible?

1. From our definition of terms, it means *to have an obligation, to owe, to be a debtor!*

2. To “be responsible” that our actions ARE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD means we are going to “give an accounting” TO HIM, or to “be answerable” for our actions! **Rom.14:12-** “*So then EACH ONE OF US shall give account of himself to God.*”

3. We are to be “**MEASURED**” by a *standard of authority* and *receive* for “how we measure up!”

C. AND, also important for our understanding is the answer to the question: “WHERE do our responsibilities come from?”

1. Initially and primarily, they come from GOD, *because of our relationships* with HIM and with EACH OTHER!

a) And this is because *GOD HAS SET THE STANDARDS of duties and obligations* in all the distinct associations we have in life. *And these responsibilities aren’t all the same, are they?*

b) For instance, we have a relationship with our spouse, and we have a relationship with our neighbor, and with our children, and our co-workers, and EVEN WITH other drivers on the highway --- but we don’t have the SAME RESPONSIBILITIES TO ALL OF THEM, do we?

2. ALSO, with obligations to God in all our relationships to be **WHAT HE** wants us to be, our responsibilities ALSO come from our society, and our civil authorities, and our “honor”, and our moral standards!

D. Who holds us accountable regarding our actions in our relationships?

1. **GOD** holds us to accountability, because we’re responsible to HIM. **2 Cor.5:10; Matt.12:36-37.**

2. **THE ELDERSHIP** under which we labor holds us accountable, because we’re responsible to the leadership of the congregation. **Heb.13:7, 17.**

3. **THE BRETHERN** with whom we’ve voluntarily associated ourselves with in fellowship hold us accountable, because we also have a duty to them! **Eph.4:16-** “*from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*”

Rom.15:27- “*Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted also [their duty is also] to minister to them in material things.*” **Heb.13:1.**

4. AND THIS IS TRUE of **every relationship in our life**, because we have obligations and responsibilities that are inherent in ALL of them, and GOD HOLDS US ACCOUNTABLE to properly address every DUTY we have IN EACH OF THEM!

5. **THE BASIC RESPONSIBILITY** we have toward GOD and ALL OTHERS is to manifest a right attitude, one that’s based on **UNCONDITIONAL LOVE** toward the parties in all our relationships! **Jno.3:16; Rom.5:8-9; Matt.22:37-39; Jno.13:34-35; Heb.13:1;**

III. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHO HOLDS US ACCOUNTABLE?

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

A. **PRIMARILY** because the revealings [or, revelations, if you please] that set forth **our duties, or obligations, or responsibilities** are the very same instruments by which we are going to be judged, or measured: in our society, by civil authorities, and by our GOD!

1. The civil laws and moral virtues and standards of decency, which keep our society from being a mob scene every day, are the standards **by which we shall be judged by our fellow men in this society.**

2. But, **more importantly**, our eternal destiny is going to be determined by a LORD Who, **IN and BY the NT**, gave us those rules and regulations which will determine, **when compared with our lives**, whether we’ve been “*good and faithful servants*” or if we’ve been “*wicked and slothful servants!*” **Jno.12:48; Rev.20:12; Matt.25:34, 41, 46-** “*Then the King will say to those on His right, Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ... Then He will also say to those on His left, Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; ... And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*”

B. **SO**, we see that we must **CARE** because there are **BENEFITS** to be **RECEIVED**, or **CONSEQUENCES** to be **SUFFERED!**

1. Great awe and respect is demanded by His everlasting power! **Matt.10:28-** “*And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell!*”

2. We are determining our own destiny by the lives we live in response to His humble pleadings for our obedience to His will: **Matt.11:28-30; Jno.14:6; Lk.6:46; 1 Pet.4:17-18; 2 Thes.1:7-9; Matt.24:42-51.**

CONCLUSION:

IT ISN’T ENOUGH just to realize *we have different relationships*. This is one of the points that every first year psychology student is confronted with. **WE MUST ALSO REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE DUTIES OR OBLIGATIONS INVOLVED**, both to **INITIATE** and to **SUSTAIN**, each relationship. Our primary focus in this lesson has been in laying the foundations for **comprehending and having** an acceptable relationship with God; of **KNOWING HOW** it is to be initiated; and finally in **UNDERSTANDING** that it is up to us to do our part in fulfilling our responsibilities to validate it!

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3- The ABC's of Acceptable Relationships

INTRODUCTION:

We all have a keen understanding that we each have many different relationships and in every facet of our lives! Some are close and more important; others are more distant and command less of our attention. And we previously set forth that with EVERY relationship there are incumbent responsibilities. There are responsibilities to God, to our family, to our fellow motorists on the freeway, to our associates at work, et al. MOST OF THE TIME, all we have to do to squash a relationship is to just quit fulfilling our responsibilities to it.

Essentially, this is a lesson on respecting the **AUTHORITY** of the Lord in our associations, not only with Him, but *in all the relationships we sustain!* Since God governs every area of our lives we must consider the directions He has given us so that we may honor and glorify Him in all that we do! THAT'S OUR ONLY PURPOSE! This is a lesson that impresses there are **BENEFITS** when we fulfill the responsibilities in each of our relationships. And thirdly, this lesson is to impress the **COMMITMENT** that is necessary to show a respect for the Lord's authority and in order to lay hold on those desired benefits.

ABC's of ACCEPTABLE relationships: authority/ benefits/ commitment.

I. AN ACCEPTABLE RELATIONSHIP DEMANDS AN AUTHORITY OF/FOR THE PARTICIPANTS TO BE INVOLVED

A. In our society why can't an 8-year-old sign a contract for a loan on a new house or car? Or, why can't they sign up to enlist in the Marine Corps?

1. NOT because they can't sign their names, but *because they don't have the legal authority to so obligate themselves.* And the reason they don't have the legal authority [**in fact – it's even ILLEGAL**] is because the laws of the land prohibit it!

a) EVEN under the civil laws where we live, you, **PERSONALLY**, have to have the authority [**meet certain criteria**] in order to be able to commit to certain things.

b) ALSO, there are certain “obligations” that one of sound mind and legal age cannot be held responsible to accomplish: viz, agreements to engage in illegal activities [import drugs or parachute off Empire State Bldg.]

c) SO ONCE AGAIN, acceptable relationships demand authority OF THOSE INVOLVED (do you have auth. to be involved in this) as well as FOR WHAT THEY DO! (do you have auth. to be doing this?)

2. There is NOT a DIFFERENT standard of authority for each of us, but we're to all subscribe to the SAME SET of Authorized Actions. [**Remember this definition:** Auth. Actions are **deeds of obedience** which are **SANCTIONED!**]

B. RELIGIOUSLY, there is a Godly Standard of authority by which we must abide in all of our relationships, even PERSONAL ones.

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1. Authorized Actions must exemplify our *relationships with fellow man* - **Matt.7:12**

a) And it all starts on our part by showing our LOVE FOR GOD! **1 Jno.4:7-11-** “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

b) We must live so that others will KNOW ABOUT God. **Matt.28:19; 2 Tim.2:2; Jno.6:44-45; 1 Cor.1:21 Rom.10:13-15-** “for “WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” 14 How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!”

c) We need to so live that others will choose to GLORIFY God. **Matt.5:13-16; Jno.17:4.**

2. Authorized Actions must be fulfilled in *family relationships* - **1 Cor.7:2-4-** “But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.”

a) Our personal obligations stand us alone and “naked” before God, notwithstanding what anyone else may do. WE have to comply, even if others don't!

b) Husbands and wives ONLY have the duties and obligations and responsibilities of HUSBANDS and WIVES – and then ONLY TO THEIR OWN husband/wife.

c) **1 Pet.3:1-7; Titus 2:1-8; Col.3:18-21-** “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them. 20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.”

3. Authorized actions must be respected and **ensued** [followed as a consequence or result of authorization] in **Spiritual Relationships** as we strive to **legitimately serve the Lord - Col.3:17**

a) AGAIN, it starts by showing our love for God! **1 Jno.5:3.**

b) And no matter what ANYONE ELSE may do – we must tenaciously hold to a “thus saith the Lord” in all our pursuits of God’s righteousness. **1 Pet.4:11; Gal.1:8-9.**

II. AN ACCEPTABLE RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BONAFIDE BENEFITS TO EACH PARTY [There must be benefits to all participants in a relationship, or else there’s no reason for both parties to sustain it!]

A. NO ONE can be expected to “acceptably” or “in full measure” TAKE ON RESPONSIBILITIES or FULFILL OBLIGATIONS in relationships if they don’t understand the **genuine benefits** involved.

1. The “benefits” are the promises for which each participant is obligated to the other.

2. The benefits are REAL, not supposed, and are SPECIFICALLY those covenanted for!

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B. There are definitive **HEAVENLY BENEFITS TO MAN:**

1. Christ Jesus came to save sinners! **Lk.19:10; 1 Tim.1:15.** [There are certain terms used to describe the benefits of salvation for man]:

a) **Reconciled: 2 Cor.5:18-20-** “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through JC, & has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as tho God were pleading throuh us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”

b) **Made alive with God: Eph.2:4-5-** “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).**”

c) “**Know**” and are “**Known**”: **2 Tim.2:19-** “Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “**The Lord knows those who are His!**” **1 Jno.2:3-4.**

d) **Fellowship** with God, Jesus Christ, & the Holy Spirit: **1 Jno.1:3, 7-** “..and truly **our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ ... But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of JC His Son cleanses us from all sin.**” **2 Cor.13:14-** “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **fellowship of the HS** be with you all.”

e) Be called the “**Sons of God**” (Abba Father): **1 Jno.3:1-** “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, **that we should be called children of God!**” **Gal.4:6-7-** “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son inbto your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” Therefore yo are no longer a slave but a son, and **if a son, then an heir of God through Christ!**”

2. There are also some MISTAKES made regarding benefits: “No illness/ No adversity/ All business deals work out/ Prayer catalog/ etc.”

C. There are also certain **EARTHLY OBLIGATIONS WHICH ENNURE TO BENEFITS FOR GOD’S CAUSE AND PURPOSE:**

1. Love God with all heart, soul, mind. **Matt.22:37-38.** [This is NOT LIKE when tha pretty new girl came into the sixth grade class! I LOVED HER, but I never spoke to her, I never carried her books, I never sent her gift, I showed NO OVERT signs of love!

2. Love neighbor as self. **Matt.22:39.** AGAIN, it has to be SHOWN!

3. There are certain terms, or conditions, that describe evidences of our love:

a) Keep my commands - **Jno.14:15, 23; 1 Jno.2:3-4.**

b) Treat others as you’d treat the Lord. **Jno.13:34-35; Matt.25:30-46.**

4. Man sometimes makes mistakes as to what GOD considers as benefits: **Lk.12:15; Col.3:5; Ps.50:10-** “For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.”

III. AN ACCEPTABLE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD IS A COVENANT KINSHIP:

A CONSCIOUSNESS OF COMMITMENT SEALED BY VOWS! [Def.

“consciousness”: “The quality or state of being aware of an inward state or an outward fact”]

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A. We **MUST** believe in and accept the guidelines God has set for each specific relationship, if we’re truly set to pleasing HIM in all things!

1. **Heb.11:6** - “**MUST**” believe that He is! [definition: “Absolute in necessity!”]
 2. This is part of the responsibility on our side of that **bi-lateral-covenant-kinship** we have with Him and is not gained all at once, but comes in the degrees of our learning and accepting His Will.
 B. It is a COVENANT RELATIONSHIP because it has been identified and established as such by the Lord! **Heb.8:6-12**. [Biblically, a “**COVENANT**” is “an agreement between two people or two groups that involves promises on the part of each to the other. A covenant implies much more than a contract or simple agreement. **A contract always has an end date, while a covenant is a permanent arrangement.** Another difference is that **a contract generally involves only one part of a person, such as a skill, while a covenant covers a person’s total being.**” -*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary p.259*]

1. It is stated to be a **NEW COVENANT [Jer.31:31]**. “Under the new covenant God would write His law on human hearts. This promised action suggested a new level of obedience, a new knowledge of the Lord, and a new forgiveness of sins.” -*Nelson’s Illus.Bib.Dict.* **Some specific differences included:**

- a) **NOW**, we have to LEARN ABOUT IT in order to become a part of it – we are not part of it simply because of our physical, national birth. **Heb.8:11.**
- b) **NOW**, we have forgiveness without annual remembrance of sins. **Heb.8:12.**
- c) **NOW**, we have a BETTER covenant, that is enacted on better PROMISES. **Heb.8:6.**

2. Also, since it is a BI-LATERAL covenant relationship, one cannot be a partaker of it ACCIDENTLY, or UNKNOWINGLY, [**Isa.35:8**- “*And a highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it.*”] **All participants in it must have:**

- a) A **desire for** as well as **knowledge of** what’s happening in the relationship change;
- b) Proper credentials, or **authorization**, to be participant in the relationship;
- c) Entrance into the relationship in an **authorized fashion**; and,
- d) An awareness of the **RESULTS** of the relationship change!

CONCLUSION:

The ABC’s of acceptable relationships INSIST that we press the questions of the study:

- 1) *Do you understand WHERE YOU ARE in your different relationships, and do you have the RIGHT, or the AUTHORITY, to be WHERE you are in those relationships?*
- 2) *Are you aware of the BENEFITS involved in your different relationships, and do you consider them worthy of your efforts and allegiance to attain them?*
- 3) *Finally, how’s your COMMITMENT these days? Are you just so BUSY you can’t really commit to anything? [What’s that say about our value of the benefits?] Or, like so many of us, are you finding it really difficult to just be consistent with your commitment to God?*

I PLEAD WITH YOU TONIGHT TO NOT LEAVE THIS BUILDING IN AN UNACCEPTABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD. **MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE** by your humble submission to His will.

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Walk hand in hand with HIM, and with those who LOVE HIM, right on out of the grip of the “cares of the world” and into that glorious reward the Lord has for the faithful!

“FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS”

Gospel Meeting at Mack Road, Sacramento, California

**4- Relationships in God’s Family:
the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ**

INTRODUCTION:

Our series of lessons is on Family Relationships! The **ONLY WAY** we can have an acceptable FAMILY RELATIONSHIP with GOD as our HEAVENLY FATHER is for us to be a part of that special appendage part of His kingdom, referred to as the **church of the Lord Jesus Christ!** This kinship is the result of a covenant relationship which is established when those who choose to yield to God in service DO SO by complying with conditions God has set forth! WE WOULD HOPE that, if you’re not already, before you leave here tonight you’d acknowledge your need for relationship with God in His church/ kingdom and comply with His conditions that would establish you as a part of His Family!

I feel it is a pretty sad situation when sincere, serious students of the Bible consider the prophecies of the **majestic Kingdom of God** and then look at **the CHURCH**, a small band of people who seem to be losing ground in the fight against evil, that there is in their hearts a feeling of disappointment and/or bewilderment. *With all God’s plans and ideals for such a noble family on earth, do you feel that He is content with such an insignificant body of people today?*

I believe that one of our biggest mistakes today is when we construe the church/kingdom of God to be JUST a body of Christians – with weaknesses and human frailties – rather than the **REIGN OF GOD IN CHRIST!** The Bible uses the word “kingdom” in different senses, and this is very important for us to acknowledge in order for us to have a proper perception of it!

I. FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES, I WANT TO ESTABLISH IN OUR MINDS HOW THE KINGDOM & CHURCH & FAMILY OF GOD ARE ALL THE SAME THING TODAY!

A. First, accept the premise that the [EUKG] Everlasting Universal Kingdom of God is the **same now** as **it has always been.**

1. The Eternal King rules all the animals & the elements, & the whole creation is invoked to praise Him. **Psa.148:5-6, 13-14; 19:1-4; 104:4.**

2. All men are under the sovereignty of God. Never has a man lived who was not under His sovereignty! This might be termed an involuntary relationship on man's part, because God rules over His creation in certain ways whether we agree to it or not! So He is our King and we are His kingdom, in that sense!

a) We're assured that God sat as King at the flood, putting down ungodliness and rebellion. **Psa.29:10-** *"The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever."*

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b) And we're impressed that **God will be King**, by peace or war: **Ezek.20:33-** *"As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be King over you."*

c) Many other illustrations could be offered showing how God controlled the history of both nations & individuals. **Isa.50:5-7** [He used Assyria]; **Gen.45:5-7; 50:20** [He used the plot of Joseph's brothers to set the course for Israel.]

d) The conclusion of these thoughts is that God has always been in control as King over all, so there has always been a Kingdom of God: and everything and everyone is under His dominion and therefore, **by definition, in His kingdom!**

B. Israel became a **PECULIAR KINGDOM, a SPECIAL-relationship people**, within the EUKG. [Will refer to this again a little later.]

1. This UNIQUE STATUS of Israel was on a special-relationship rule of God.

a) The special relationship was a result of God's promise to faithful Abraham. **Gen.12:1-3.**

b) This special relationship was **further emphasized** at the deliverance from Egypt and the conditions set forth at Sinai. **Exod.19:5-8-** *"Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. "These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." 7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!"*

c) Need to make sure that two important facts are understood about this special relationship.

1) The rule of God over Israel was only ONE expression of His dominion, not totality of it!

2) God is STILL the UNIVERSAL RULER. **Pharaoh** was His subject just as surely as **Moses**, but **God had this SPECIAL relationship with Moses and Israel!** [Will also be referring to this a little later!]

2. Further development of this PECULIAR KINGDOM is seen in a more EARTHLY sense when Saul was appointed King over Israel. BUT, since God had promised the scepter would go to Judah [**Gen.49:10**], this Benjaminite ruling over Israel was just a temporary provision!

a) DAVID was then chosen as king with the promise that HIS SEED would always possess the right to rule Israel.

1) So the kingdom of God in this special manifestation as the kingdom of Israel took on a human/ Divine look with David as king over this special facet of the Kingdom of GOD! **1 Chron.28:5-**

"And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons), He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel." 2 Chron.13:8- *"So now you intend to resist the kingdom of the LORD through the sons of David, being a great multitude and having with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made for gods for you."*

2) **Keep this clear: David was not over GOD, but just over this special aspect of His kingdom.** David kept praising & serving God: **1 Chron.29:10-11-** *"David said, "Blessed art Thou, O LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 11 "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O LORD, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all."*

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b) EVEN HERE, God assured that if David's seed ever transgressed He would severely punish them, BUT HE WOULD NEVER BREAK THE COVENANT! **Psalms 89.**

3. Very quickly now, we see how their ungodliness brought about God's punishment, but did not

nullify the covenant God had made!

a) Solomon's wickedness brought about the division of the Kingdom of God's special relationship's manifestation in Israel, w/ten tribes going to Jeroboam into the North. Kingdom.

b) Northern Kingdom became very wicked and God finally removed them through the Assyrians in 722-721 BC, never to return as an independent kingdom.

c) The lineage of David also continues in evil and the Lord takes them off into captivity, **punishing them** just as He'd promised He would.

d) But the day was coming when the kingdom would be restored ... **IN THE MESSIAH ...** in fulfillment of passages such as **Psa.89** and **2 Sam.7:12-13**- "*When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."* **AT ANY RATE, THIS IS WHAT THE ANGEL THOUGHT [LK.1:31-33]; AND IT'S WHAT PETER PREACHED ON PENTECOST! Acts2:29ff.**
C. TODAY, the EUKG is still the SAME eternal kingdom it's always been with a SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP to those who compose the RESTORED Davidic rule in Jesus Christ – seen in the CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1. Recall how we emphasized the K. of G. over Israel was only ONE expression of His Rule, but not the totality of it?

a) SAME is true regarding Christ's rule over His Church ... it's only one expression of His rule, but not the totality of it!

b) **HE RULES ALL MEN:** the good & the bad; the rebell. & the obed. (Moses & Pharaoh)

2. ***So Christ DOES rule Christians; they DO constitute the church; the term "KINGDOM" IS applied to the church of Christ!***

a) Word "church" is not as broad a term as the word "kingdom". [viz. That group aka. the President's "kitchen cabinet" are only citizens of this country, just like US, only they have a SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP to the president.]

b) Word "kingdom" used in different senses in the Bible. Sometimes the "church of Christ" not even included in its meaning!

3. **BUT, when EUKG is being referred to through the special representative relationship of the Church – CAN YOU SEE THAT THIS ATTACHES SOME IMPORTANCE TO THE CHURCH?**

a) As God regarded Israel in **Amos 3:2**- "*You only have I known [in a special relationship] of all the families of the earth*" --- so the same thing is true in the Church/ Kingdom of JC today!

b) **Church of Christ IS Kingdom of Christ in our family relationship with God today!** Can you even imagine that anyone *could* "*join the kingdom of your choice*" and be in an acceptable relationship to God?

4. This special relationship of the Church/ Kingdom of Christ had it's beginning on Pentecost. **Mk.9:1; Acts 1:6-8.**

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II. BEING A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY [THE KINGDOM/ CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST] IS STILL THE MOST NOTABLE PURPOSE AND REMARKABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THIS LIFE!

A. *We identify with the Kingdom of God* when we're **CALLED INTO** that commonwealth. **Eph.2:11-22;** This **demand**s **CONVERSION** on our part to initiate the relationship! **Matt.18:3; 2**

Thes.2:14; Heb.11:6; Acts 17:30; 2:38; 3:19. This, **IN FACT,** is the process of the new birth. **Jno.3:3-5.**

1. In order for us to be a part of the **FAMILY OF GOD** today, we must become a part of that kingdom/ church that has a SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP with God! See: **Col.1:13.**

2. What **OTHER** relationships does being a part of God's Family affect? [viz. WHO else related to and WHO ARE WE NOT RELATED TO?]

a) This fellowship ties us in close union – not only with **GOD** – but with **EACH OTHER.** I must also perceive a relationship of all others who are related to God!

b) So there exists a fellowship (*by definition*) with all the other individuals who are in fellowship with God! Can we imagine those in such spiritual proximity with God and each other not getting along, or trying to do injury to each other?

c) And we are **NOT "spiritual-family-related"** to those who are NOT a part of that church/ kingdom relationship with God!

B. Our associations with those NOT IN the kingdom/ church relationship with God **might be like when we go to a family picnic at the park!**

1. There may be other families there, but they're NOT OUR FAMILY, even though we may be acquainted with them!

2. The children may PLAY together and some may even EAT together, but they're still not in the family!

3. One of our boys MAY even be dating a girl from a different group there in the park, **but she's STILL NOT A PART OF THE FAMILY [not an heir] UNTIL THEY'RE MARRIED!** *Can we understand this?*

C. There may even be some who haven't obeyed the gospel we FEEL CLOSER TO than others, but until THEY'RE in a good spiritual relationship with GOD they **CANNOT BE COUNTED AS THE ELECT**, or as *those who ARE in God's special family*.

1. In **Mark 12:34** Jesus told a scribe who had spoken intelligently, "*You are NOT FAR from the kingdom of God!*"

a) Now that scribe may have been **THINKING** right, and perhaps even **BELIEVING** right, but that's not the same as **DOING RIGHT!** **Jas.2:19; Jno.12:42-43.** [Define **confess** = "to acknowledge by **WORDS** and **ACTIONS!**"]

b) This scribe *wasn't yet* IN THE KINGDOM *for want of* ACTING RIGHT, *since one* MUST BE BORN AGAIN *to be in* the Kingdom (FAMILY) of God! **Jno.3:3-5.**

2. I must also realize [**recognize by the SCRIPTURES – our only guide religiously**] that I have an "enlightening-obligation" to our *spiritual* NON-relatives! cf. **Mk.16:15; Rom.1:14-15.**

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CONCLUSION:

I believe with a deep and abiding conviction that we need to tell about the glory and scope of the Kingdom of our Master! **Please reconsider the question we asked in the introduction:** *With all God's plans and ideals for such a noble family on earth, do you feel that He is content with such an insignificant body of people today?* An inept, unspiritual, lackadaisical, non-growing congregation of the church of Christ ~ *whose main purpose seems to be in sustaining itself by exalting human opinions and minimizing the saving attitude of Jesus Christ* ~ is NOT a true representation of the Kingdom of God! May I say to you very forcefully, yet with much love in my heart, that **when we become insignificant** we are no longer His NOBLE FAMILY. We may still be shirt tail relations with the opportunity to get back into His Grace, but **in that condition we're no longer the picture of a mightily armed CLAN who's doing battle for the KING, the ETERNAL SOVEREIGN OF THE UNIVERSE!** It is ONLY when we depict the true **DOMINION** of God in our respect and obedience that we are truly the Kingdom/ church of Christ in that special relationship!

NOW, TONIGHT, YOU CAN ALL be an important part of that Kingdom/Church of Christ:

FIRST, make your own personal decision to be part of it by yielding to God's plan: F+R+B= Rof S and **Acts 2:47.**

THEN, determine that YOU PERSONALLY are going to make a difference for Jesus Christ ! that you're going to be an active, vibrant, loving and obedient member of that FAMILY OF GOD.

DON'T BE A SPIRITUAL DERELICT! DON'T be a problem child! **DON'T** be a spiritual juvenile delinquent! If you need to **MAKE A CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE** to be a **STAR PUPIL** – to be an **OBEDIENT CHILD** – to be a **TRUE HEIR** of the promises – *then come forward as we stand and sing!*

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"FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS"

Gospel Meeting at Mack Road, Sacramento, California

5- Husband and Wife Relationship: A GODLY HOME

INTRODUCTION:

God's plan for marriage is ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN FOR LIFE! That is also the basis for the home that pleases God! For the last five years there have been approx. 2.5 million marriages in the USA. It is approximated that figure can be expected to continue, and it's also anticipated during these next few years that we can expect about HALF of the new marriages to end in divorce – and I don't doubt the accuracy of that estimate, primarily because many of these couples getting married now just really don't give much thought to the efforts and work involved in **STARTING A HOME**, and perhaps even **LESS** in **MAINTAINING** a home. SO MANY OF US just really seem **UNCONCERNED** about home maintenance, or how to repair one after deterioration sets in!

It's really sad that EVERYONE doesn't have a deep and abiding concern about the HOME UNIT! In today's society many people seem to take **more time** and give **more care** and show **more concern** and invest in **more upkeep** to their **HOUSE** or to their **CAR** than they do to their **HOME UNIT!** We want to focus on three areas of concern regarding maintaining a Godly home. A fourth point will also be considered in our study on Thursday evening. But tonight, I want to deal with *maintenance, replacement or remodelling!* And to be able to focus more acutely on our NEEDS, I'm going to compare our HOUSE with our HOME!

I. A "HOUSE" IS A TANGIBLE, PHYSICAL ASSET, THAT HAS NATURAL TENDENCIES OF DEPRECIATION AND DETERIORATION OVER LONG

PERIODS OF TIME! (& req. periodic maint./ replace./ or remodelling.)

A. The average life expectancy of a **“HOUSE”**: **about 50 years!**

B. **There are several forces that cause deterioration or dissatisfaction with a house:**

1. **Externally:** the elements (sun/ wind/ rain); deteriorating neighborhood resulting in economic depreciation [*a blighted area*]; or maybe even vandalism.

2. **Internally:** termites, dry rot, rust & mineral deposits in pipes, leaky water damage, or even misuse and abuse of the facilities.

3. **Dysfunctional obsolescence:** old fashioned conveniences and outdated “modernizations”; less effective HVAC units; & family needs that have changed because of size of family or personal desires or increased economic abilities.

C. There are several AVAILABLE OPTIONS when a house has deteriorated or become unsatisfactory:

1. Get in touch with your local arsonist and have him **“torch” it**, or set dynamite all around it and **blow it up!** [**THIS IS NOT ADVISED, & IT IS ILLEGAL!**]

2. You can just **“trash”** it and continue to live in it!

3. You can **abandon it** and go live with your neighbors or relatives!

4. OR, you can **REMODEL** it!

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II. A “HOME” IS A PHYSICAL/ EMOTIONAL/ SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP ESTABLISHED WHEN THE HUSBAND~WIFE DEPENDENCY IS INITIATED:

(Lot of jokes about the home/ husbands/ wives ... but most recognize the seriousness and the importance, as well as the eternal consequences of having a good home life!)

A. Average life expectancy: **About 50 years.**

B. There are certain forces that will nearly always deteriorate or cause dissatisfaction in the home unit, unless we’re well prepared and defended against them!

1. **Externally:** Close associations with those outside the home unit who have different goals, morals, and ideals who would urge us to impurity - **1 Cor.15:33**; pure, unadulterated lust - **James 1:14-15**- [*“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires [lusts] and enticed. Then, when desire [lust] has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fullgrown, brings forth death.”*]; impure alliances and allegiances [*could be WORK or a CLUB or even a favorite RECREATION!*]

a) Some people who’ve ended up in the divorce court because of adultery have said HOW SURPRISED they were that it happened: *“I never thought it would happen to me! I wasn’t out LOOKING for it!”*

b) **BE ADVISED** [almost a bad promise]: *“You’re going to get your opportunity for adultery!”*

c) **The BIG POINT is:** Know ahead of time *what you’ll do* if/when you are faced with a decision about adultery! **PLAN AHEAD TO AVOID UNGODLY ACTIONS! 1 Cor.7:2.**

d) **DON’T WAIT UNTIL** you get caught up in the moment and are flattered that a pretty young secretary is flirting with you! **PREPARE NOW HOW YOU’RE GOING TO SAY NO!**

2. **Internally:** *Rotten attitudes* by family members; a *loss of focus* on common, benefitting goals; *inordinate desires* [excessive, wanting the wrong things]; getting *bored* with the normal routines; allowing our familiarity to breed *contempt for each other*, etc.

3. **Dysfunctional attributes:**

a) **SOME OF US allow traits and desires to develop** that **AUTOMATICALLY** lend to the *malfunction of a home*, including **midlife crises** [cf. James Dobson, who @ 36 realized he was all ready more than half as old as his dead father!]; or **seeking other options** [*desirable, available, “greener pastures”*]!

b) **Just losing our focus** by not having a maintenance agenda to fortify the frailties that arise!

4. **One of the greatest reasons for the deterioration of a home unit:**

a) **IT IS NOT** money; the Lord/ church/ Bible; others in the family!

b) **And it hasn’t changed in the last 2,000 years:** it can usually be traced to a *disposition of SELFISHNESS* that manifests itself in a lack of **proper care** for the home unit, **concern** for the home unit, AND **maintenance and upkeep** of the home unit! **Phil.2:3-4**- *“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”*

c) It’s a result of that **“EYE or MY”** disease: of someone becoming more concerned with **MY** wants, **MY** pleasures, **MY** work, or **MY** playthings. [*At split-up of marriage man said all he wanted was MY retirement and MY toys!*]

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C. **OPTIONS THAT ARE AVAILABLE** when a **“HOME”** has deteriorated or become unsatisfactory:

1. **Again, FIGURATIVELY**, you can **“TORCH IT”** or **“BLOW IT UP!”** **ESSENTIALLY**, this is

what's done when you DESTROY the family unit by DIVORCE or MURDER or MAYHEM (violent destruction)! **[THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT ADVISED!]**

2. OR, you can just "trash" it and keep having a **home life of turmoil** in spiritual and emotional deterioration!

3. OR, you can **abandon** your *association with* and *responsibilities to* your home unit [FAMILY!] and go live with someone else!

4. OR, you could **REFURBISH** and **REMODEL that home** and **MAKE IT into the kind of relationship** you've always **DREAMED OF IT BEING!**

III. THE STABILITY OF A HOUSE DEPENDS ON THE FOUNDATION, AND THE FOUNDATION OF A GODLY HOME IS THE COVENANT COMMITMENT IN

THE HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIP! MATT.7:21-28 [Of MAJOR

importance in building, maintaining or remodelling is the QUALITY OF MATERIAL that's used in the foundation! And that's what the balance of this lesson is about!]

A. **FIDELITY** [*faithfulness, allegiance*] [It's impossible to have a GOOD COVENANT unless there's a FAITHFULNESS to it by both parties involved in the covenant!]

1. We **EACH** have a fiduciary relationship [*like a stewardship*] to everyone else in the family unit, and we're not acceptable to God so long as our obligation is unfulfilled!

a) Being "**FAITHFUL**" to the family is more than just a requirement between husband and wife, although it **DOES** have **VERY SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE** for them!

b) Every member is to **support** the family unit, **uphold** it, **honor** it, **glorify** it by our actions, **not bring shame or reproach** on it's name, and to **love** it and **be at peace** with those who are in it!

2. "**Fidelity**" also carries with it the idea of **allegiance to the home unit!**

a) **GOD MUST BE FIRST IN OUR LIVES; NEXT** must be our family! >>>**This order of importance is determined by the responsibilities God has placed on family members!**

b) The old adage of "*blood being thicker than water*" is an idea expressing the allegiance we're to have to the **HOME!** This also carries over in importance to the "*blood relationship*" in our Spiritual Family!

3. The idea of "*trustworthiness*" is closely akin to this trait and would certainly apply in the sense of our being **principled in righteousness** and **have the honor and disposition to BE everything which God calls for** us to be in our relationship!

a) After all, isn't this precisely what we **PLEDGED** in our vows: [*in nearly every wedding ceremony there are words like*] **All that I AM & All that I HAVE, I give to thee!**

b) "*Faithfulness, allegiance, trustworthiness*" **will not allow me** to go back on my **PROMISE!**

B. DURABILITY

1. Credit cards and insurance company stickers proclaim durability of association ... NOT for anyone else's benefit, but for **YOURS ... to KEEP YOU** with them!

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a) Haven't you ever made a decision based solely on durability of association?

b) **HAVE YOU STAYED** with an insurance company, even though they're a little higher this time? **HAVE YOU EVER REFUSED** to change jobs or schools or apartments just because you'd been there so long? **DO YOU SHOP** at a particular grocery store just because your time of association makes you more comfortable there?

2. I heard a woman on a TV show tell her *consort in unfaithfulness* that she had to "*break off their relationship*" because "**I have a 20-year marriage and I still love my husband!**"

3. **Learning to APPRECIATE** anything is usually **BASED ON OVERCOMING OBSTACLES** and, *in nearly everything, TIME can be an obstacle!*

a) It is especially true of relationships, because "*happy associations*" have to be **CULTURED** and **CONTINUALLY WORKED ON**, so even those married only for a year or two have already overcome many obstacles to get to where they are right now!

b) **The DURATION OF TIME is also a strong ALLY!** And those married for **20, or 40, or 60** years are to be praised – *for their stick-to-it-tiveness* – but this **consistency** is in reality **THEIR COVENANT LOYALTY**. It manifests a reciprocation to God's witness to their vows, and also manifests the measure of seriousness they have to their covenant relationship.

1) Movie few years ago [**"4 Seasons"**] about four couples who vacationed together every year.

2) Then one couple divorced and the man remarried and brought his new wife to the vacation.

Much discomfort and even anger finally brought out the remark: "**Couldn't you have just stayed in there and fought it out, like the rest of us have done!?**"

c) Durability & longevity **is** something to be cherished and appreciated – **especially in the HOME** – and it shows our **HONOR!** You **PROMISED!** You **MADE A COVENANT!**

C. DEDICATION

1. “*She’s such a dedicated wife!*” “*They’re such devoted parents!*” What do people mean by such statements? **WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND when you HEAR such statements?**

2. “**Dedication**” means “*devotion, consecration, piety*”.

a) Being a dedicated wife or devoted parents means they’re **facing up to their obligations**, they’re **fulfilling their responsibilities**, they’re **accomplishing the needed efforts**, they’re **reaching for their goals** which would **DEPICT THEM AS BEING** such a spouse or parents!

b) “*Dedication*” or “*devotion*” cannot stand alone, but when used as verbs are transitive and must have an object, and always **must be manifested** in **OVERT ACTIONS**, in **LOVE** and in **ALLEGIANCES!**

3. WITH THAT, we can see why dedication is so important in home units! If everyone is devoted in honest and open ways to sustain and enrich the home, **IT CANNOT HELP BUT BE BETTER!**

D. TRUSTWORTHINESS [*reliable, true, dependable*]

1. Can the others in your “**home group**” really depend on your promises?

a) When you “give your word” on something, do they really expect that to happen, or is there still apprehension until it actually comes to pass? “*I’ll be through with work in time to be at your ball game!*” or “*Yes, Son, I’ll fix your favorite dinner & bake a cake for your birthday!*” or

“*I’ll be able to take off work so we can take the vacation trip together as a family!*” or “*We’re just going over to Billy’s house to play, & we won’t go anywhere else!*” – **ARE YOUR PROMISES OFTEN MADE WITH EMPTY SURETY! Psalms 5:9-** “*There is nothing reliable in what*

21 *they say; their inward part is destruction itself; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue!*”

b) HOW can you expect to impress others, both in your family and out of it, with the attributes of Christianity if you’re not trustworthy, or truthful, or dependable?

c) Can your mate, or your “teenage” children, or your parents – **as the case may be** – TRUST you to **NOT EMBARRASS** them in given situations? **Can you be relied on to empathize with and be considerate** of them?

2. Are you always dependable in **FULFILLING YOUR ROLE AND POSITION** in the home?

a) **I mean, really now, can the others in your family unit honestly count on you?**

b) TRUST is one of the really important aspects of compatibility! Nehemiah appointed four men over the storehouses, “*for they were considered RELIABLE, and it was their task to distribute to their kinsmen.*” **Neh.13:13.**

3. Whether it’s the *husband and wife relationship* or the *parent-child relationship*, or a *sibling relationship*, are you really faithful and true to the relationship so others can have the confidence in you they need to have? **Prov.3:33-** “*The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the dwelling of the righteous.*”

CONCLUSION:

While this lesson is primarily about our responsibilities to the HOME UNIT and how to be content and joyful in it, I ALSO HOPE you can see that, as Christ pointed out through Paul in **Eph.5:21-30** that there’s a great similarity between Christ and His church **AND OUR** physical family relationships! **SO, whatever it takes on our parts to have a good HOME life, it also takes on our parts to have a good CHURCH life, and this is what makes up a good relationship with Jesus Christ!**

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“FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS”

Gospel Meeting at Mack Road, Sacramento, California

6- Local Congregations of the Church of Christ:

Functional Relationships for God’s Family

Acts 9:26

INTRODUCTION:

It seems that many people try to decide on a congregation like some whom I’ve known were looking for a house to buy or rent: they’re looking for an IDEAL! When I was in high school my folks drew plans and built a house, supposedly their ideal! But before the construction was completed, changes were being made! As people’s NEEDS are constantly changing, so their IDEAL house is constantly changing. NO LOCAL CONGREGATION is PERFECT ! and if THAT’S what we’re looking for then as soon as we find it and join ourselves to it – **it won’t be perfect any more!**

One of our more vital and important connections we have with other people is the relationship we sustain to the congregation of God’s people we’re a part of. It’s an interwoven society of saved people who are voluntarily bound together for a common cause: **SERVING THE LORD!**

The congregation I am a part of depends on me INDIVIDUALLY, and I depend on the members of the congregation, both INDIVIDUALLY and COLLECTIVELY! It is essential to our spiritual development and progress and **we cannot hope to acceptably serve God to our fullest without being an active part of a**

local congregation! == BECAUSE ---

I. LOCAL CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE GOD-ORIGINATED AND GOD-SANCTIONED!

A. In the first century after that notable day of Pentecost, it wasn't just a form of "evolution" nor was it just "happstance" that the followers of Christ got to meeting together.

1. It was in keeping with the foresight, planning and accomplishment of God! **Heb.8:1, 5-6**- "*Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ...[AND]...just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."* 6 *But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises."*

2. And **Heb.8:5** is NOT talking about a physical structure, but about the BODY OF CHRIST ... and **each congregation is to be BUILT ACCORDING TO GOD'S PATTERN!**

B. The relationship of the members in a local congregation results in great and awesome duties and responsibilities.

1. One of our MOST NOTABLE obligations is to GLORIFY GOD AS A CONGREGATION! [IN THE CHURCH] **Eph.3:20-21**- "*To Him who is able to do so much more that we can ever ask for, or even think of, by means of the power working in us: to God be the glory in the church and [EVEN] in Christ Jesus, for all time, forever and ever! Amen. [GNMM]*

a) A common practice to specifically show HOW we glorify God is to cite Jesus' prayer in **John chapter 17** where He tells how HE glorified God: **verse 4**: "*I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.*"

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b) The universal church, per se, has no earthly organization and **no function**, or **work!** If we, collectively, are to glorify God as the church, then it is necessary for us, as a **LOCAL CONGREGATION to do so**, – and we do that simply by **ACCOMPLISHING THE WORK WHICH GOD GAVE THE LOCAL CONGREGATION TO DO!**

c) And the SCRIPTURES tell us all about the WORK we're supposed to do! **2 Tim.3:16-17.**

2. Personal actions by each of us directly affect the stability and progress of the local congregation [either *positively* or *negatively*]:

a) We are to support the local body with all our assets.

1) Financially, morally, with physical presence, time & effort, and encouragements to both leaders and followers!

2) Letting our influence both within and without the body be as beneficial to Christ's cause as it can [all of us are leaders of *someone* whom we can develop and help to keep reaching out to others].

3) INVOLVING OURSELVES in the work of the church: PG – ES – BW.

b) We're to be personally involved in outreaches to the lost, less fortunate, sick, et al.

1) Identifying those who **CAN BE REACHED** is an invaluable task needed continually.

2) Teaching, caring for, tending to others [spiritually & physically] are duties always needing more **WORKERS** [not **SHIRKERS**]!

c) Personal development and growth is laid upon each of us, both individually and collectively.

Heb.5:10-14; 1 Pet.2:1-2; 2 Pet.3:18.

3. Negatively, when duties and responsibilities are NOT FULFILLED there's going to be an ultimate **DEFICIENCY OF PROGRESS** for the cause of Christ, both **functionally** and **influentially!**

a) We need to FEEL that **personal negligence** by any one of us will cause a hardship on those who are still trying to function! [**They can't function (work) as well if we're standing in the way with our negativism!**]

b) We should understand our laxity will deter the proper development of others in the group. [**We'll be influencing – by our actions -- others to also be LAX!**]

c) SO many of the lost in the congregation's realm, or scope of influence, will not be reached because of our malfunction and inactivity!

II. MEMBERSHIP IN A LOCAL FELLOWSHIP SUMMARIZES OUR SPIRITUAL FAMILY RELATIONSHIP. [It promotes that "blood is thicker than water" kind of interdependence between the family members - because of the Blood of Christ!]

A. LOVE, as with all close family members, must be continually shown, **unconditionally**, to ALL members of the family! **Heb.13:1; Jno.13:34-35.**

1. Even though some relationships are closer than others, must recognize we're FAMILY to all in the Local Congregation!

2. Sometimes we may even disagree, **STRONGLY**, but must recognize we're still a family!

a) We've all heard about members in other congregations who are so at "outs" that they can't even sit on the same side of the auditorium when they come to worship the Lord!

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b) Like the principle which married people must understand: "**DIVORCE** is NOT a feasible option – **you need to work out your problems;**" so brethren also need to understand that "**SCHISMS** (or factions) in the body of Christ are NOT feasible options – **we need to work out our problems!**"

B. HOW DO WE SHOW our love and admiration for this family we have **in the Lord?**

1. By having a **CLOSE ASSOCIATION** with those we love!

a) Have them over/ be together with them/ speak well of them when they're not present!

b) DO things together for mutual enjoyment/ edification.

c) Several people with whom we've had FOUR GENERATIONS of close friendships!

2. We give **HELP** to those we love!

a) On different projects: (in the past) barn-raising/ painting/ roundup/ etc.

b) Overcoming problems: with children, jobs, health, etc.

3. We **DEPEND ON** those we love [NOT just USING someone!].

a) For life's little joys: fun times/ family associations/ pleasures of life.

b) For help through life's myriad of ordeals: sicknesses/ injuries/ raising kids/ deaths.

c) GET and GIVE spiritual strength and stability to each other.

C. FAMILY relationships call for a sharing of family BLESSINGS & demand **COMMITMENTS!**

1. Certain RIGHTS and PRIVILEGES belong to family members [not just responsibilities].

a) Right of family members to petition their father for aid and assistance. **1 Pet.3:12.**

b) Access to family treasures (spiritual assets): **Eph.1:3; 5:23.**

2. As family, we are obligated to a definite commitment to the two primary elements of Christ's Cause: Evangelism & Edification!

a) Edification (building up) of the body of Christ originates from Christ who "*nourishes and cherishes*" her to be spotless and without wrinkle. **Eph.5:25-27.**

b) Evangelism is accomplished as we **preach the word** and also as we **display His bride!**

1) One of our LOUDEST proclamations of the gospel to those outside our fellowship is our ATTITUDE to each other ... our attitude to the congregation!

2) HOW does Christ draw men to Himself? The world OBSERVES and RESPONDS as it:

i) Hears the teaching (*krygma*)

ii) Observes the fellowship (*koinonia*)

iii) Experiences the love in worship & service (*diakonia*)

III. THE LOCAL CONGREGATION IS THE GOD-ORIGINATED UNIT OF GROUP-FUNCTION FOR HIS FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

A. The congregation is a LOCAL CHURCH, and the CHURCH is where salvation is! **Eph.5:23; Acts 2:47; 2 Tim.2:10; cf. Eph.1:22-23.**

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B. The local congregation is the only collective unit of function that God has authorized for His kingdom/ church to function through.

1. It's TRUE and we recognize that most obligations are carried out on an individual basis.

Col.3:17; Gal.6:9-10.

2. But the things that are done collectively as God's Family are done only through Local Congregations: Preaching the Gospel, Edifying the Saints, Benevolent Work. NO OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OR BODY IS AUTHORIZED BY GOD TO SUPPLANT THE CHURCH IN **DOING THE WORK GOD HAS GIVEN HER TO DO!** [cf. **Violations**]:

a) *Preaching*: Boston Ch.Discipling Movement; Spon.Ch.Arrang.for Ch.Coop.; Miss.Soc.

b) *Edifying*: Promise Keepers; Campus Crusade; Colleges; Other edification societies.

c) *Benevolence*: Societies for helping sick/ poor/ widows/ old folks/ etc.

C. The Local Congregation is an *Arena of FELLOWSHIP* in God's planned family relationship.

1. Such is impressed in passages like **1 Jno.1:3, 6-7**- "*what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*"

2. Paul, also, refers to THIS facet of the relationship in **Gal.2:9**- "*...James & Cephas & John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship...*" **and also 1 Cor.1:9**- "*God is faithful, through Whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

D. Any continuing/ sustaining relationship to God must be IN/ THRU the Local Congregation.

1. ONE of the things travelling N.T. Christians did was to find a congregation of God's people they could be a part of. **Acts 9:26**

2. NO OTHER BODY in which to render effectual, honorable service to God in carrying out our part of doing the work of the Church! **Eph.3:21.**

CONCLUSION:

IF YOU'RE NOT A VIBRANT, ACTIVE MEMBER OF A LOCAL CONGREGATION of the Body of Christ you can't be fulfilling all your responsibilities in your service to God according to His ordained plan **IF~~~**

1) You're not **SAVED** from the guilt of your sins - **Acts 2:47**

2) You're not **A PART OF HIS FAMILY** - **1 Tim.3:15.**

3) You're not **AN HEIR OF GOD'S** - **Rom.8:16-17**

Why not obey His gospel and be saved tonight? **B + R + C + B = R of S**

"FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS"

Gospel Meeting at Mack Road, Sacramento, California

7- Functional Parent-Child Relationships

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In A Non-functional World

INTRODUCTION:

How are parents and their children supposed to FUNCTION in their relationship? AND, with so much negativism all around, how can we be the overcomers necessary to appease the demands God has made on each of us in this relationship? First, let's be clear on just what we're asking: **FUNCTION: To have or perform a function; serve:** [Latin *f_ncti_, f_ncti_n-*, performance, execution, from *f_nctus*, past participle of *fung_*, to perform, execute.] **Synonyms: function, duty, role.** The central meaning shared by these nouns is *"the actions and activities assigned to, required of, or expected of a person": INCLUDING THE ROLE OF A PARENT OR OFFSPRING IN A*

FAMILY

RELATIONSHIP!

I. THE HOME IS THE TEACHING PLATFORM FOR PARENTS BY WHICH

THEY LAY FOUNDATIONS FOR BRINGING THEIR CHILDREN INTO

ACCEPTABLE RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOTH GOD AND THEIR SOCIETY!

A. A **GODLY HOME** EXALTS A NATION, because it is THERE that righteousness is **first imparted and practiced!** **Prov. 14:34-** *"Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people."*

1. The wise man is setting forth here an eternal, unbreakable truth!

a) We can reject it or ignore it, or we may even put it completely out of our minds, **BUT ONE THING WE'LL NEVER DO: WE CAN'T CHANGE IT!**

b) It's like the law of gravity, it always works, whether we think about it or not, or even whether we like or not – **EXALTATION COMES FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS!**

2. AND THE EARLIEST AND BEST PLACE FOR US TO LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS IS IN THE HOME!

Consequences of this TRUTH can be either good or bad; we decide by our reaction to it in the choices we make in teaching and training our children!

B. From first man ADAM, it has been God's plan for parents to teach and train and encourage their children in order to enable them to become better citizens of His Kingdom and, hence, would also bring about a higher standard in each society!

1. Man was given instructions in the garden about duties and responsibilities. That is also where he was told to bear children. **Gen.1:27-28-** *"And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

a) As with everything else in the garden, we would assume that **they'd be man's responsibility and under his care and keeping!**

b) ALSO, after they were cast from the garden it has been specifically so stated throughout all the generations of man on the earth! **Deut.6:4-9-** *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; 7 and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." **Prov.22:6-** *"Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it."* **Eph.6:4-** *"And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* **Col.3:21-** *"Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart."**

c) ALSO, in the “Patriarchal Dispensation” pecking-order of things, the fathers had the responsibility to making sure the children were cared for, trained, learned a trade, married, succeeded, etc.

2. **God has NEVER LESSENE THE LOAD OF PARENTS’ responsibilities to children--**

a) **Even though** our school systems are now different from how Cain and Abel were schooled,

b) And **even though** our religious institutions are trying more and more to take over the responsibilities of the home,

c) And many working parents in this acquisitive society have neither the time nor the inclination to teach or train their children!

II. THE HOME IS THE “LEARNING UNIT” FOR CHILDREN IN OUR SOCIETY AS WELL AS IN GOD’S DIVINE PLAN FOR FAMILIES! The home is the key unit of society

A. The **HOME UNIT** includes the parents, all the children, the grandparents, and uncles and aunts, as well as other relatives. **WE NEED ALL THE ASSISTANCE WE CAN GET IN HELPING OUR CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO GOD, TO FAMILY, AND TO SOCIETY!**

B. It is at the HOME level where basic and instinctive values WILL BE imparted.

1. For better or worse, intentionally or unintentionally, taught or untaught, received or not!

2. If *God’s righteousness* is not RELATED and RECEIVED, then **someone else’s standard of right will be!** It is the responsibility of the home to impart the values that exalt our nation!

3. The responsibility of the home is to move children from a state of total dependence at infancy, to a responsible independence at adulthood, and on to a **benevolent, caring, loving concern** *when it’s finally time for them to start taking care of US!*

2. WE are either the **beneficiaries** or the **victims** of the way OUR children are raised.

D. PLEASE BE IMPRESSED: one failure in child rearing can upset a single family, or a complete community, or an entire country, or the whole world.

1. Testimony of history: Adolph Hitler, Charles Manson, the Son of Sam, Jack the Ripper...etc.

2. Testimony of current headlines impresses us that such dregs on our society are still being produced, and they’re still being TRAINED IN OUR HOMES!

3. YOUR home is important to YOUR children having a proper understanding of things – and if YOU’RE not teaching them – WHO IS?

4. And if it is the responsibility of the parents to TEACH, it is the responsibility of the children to show honor and respect in LEARNING and APPLYING godly principles in their own lives!

Eph.6:1-3- “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.*”

5. **Read poem about what a parent CAN and CANNOT DO, from 4/14/96 bulletin.**

III. SINCE IT IS IN THE HOME THAT PARENTS & CHILDREN HAVE THEIR TEACHING AND LEARNING RELATIONSHIP, LET IT BE NOTED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO IMPART ARE THOSE THINGS WHICH WOULD DRAW THEM BOTH CLOSER TO GOD AS WELL AS TO UPGRADE THEIR SOCIETY!

A. PARENTS and CHILDREN must both **learn** and **share** in the experiences of *How To Practice Acceptable Relationships!*

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1. Every person in a relationship needs to realize they have a **ROLE**, and **properly function therein!**

a) Anytime anyone is **OUT OF ROLE** there is a *disruption of proper, functional fulfillment.*

b) Disruptions cause **HARDSHIPS** – on others as well as self!

c) In multi-harnessed teams of both dogs and horses there are both “leaders” and “pullers” – and if EITHER is in the wrong place it disrupts and penalizes the efforts of the whole team!

d) The parent is NOT the child, and the child is NOT the parent, and they **CANNOT SWITCH ROLES**, neither *acceptably* nor *functionally* in the sight of God!

e) **ROLE-CHANGING is only to be effected through education and growth!**

2. Each needs to understand and fulfill the responsibilities attached to EACH ROLE!

a) There are both **benefits** and **penalties** attached to every obligation, and **WHICH COMES** depends on adequate, acceptable fulfillment of duty.

b) The ability to get along with others is not only a valuable asset, **IT’S DEMANDED OF GOD!**

Matt.22:39- “*Love neighbor!*” **Heb.13:1-** “*Love brethren!*” **Matt.5:44-** “*Love enemies!*”

B. PARENTS and CHILDREN must both **learn** and **share** in *understanding the needs, planning the deeds, and setting the goals* for the family, as well as all working on understanding the “**WHY’S**” of **REWARDS/ MORALS/ IDEALS** in the family!

1. Can't always just "TELL" the children "*how it's going to be*" without explanations, or without showing them the standards or "rules" by which we're acting, or without exemplifying our own consistency with the Lord's standard! [We're not only guiding the family, we're training new PARENTS!]
2. Many of the **non-functional-world-ideals** have destroyed the godly relationships of many Parents and Children!

a) It is **in the home** children must learn about **LOVE, COURTSHIP & MARRIAGE!**

1) Including about **dating, & petting, & even promiscuity.** [*Indiscriminate in the choice of sexual partners*].

2) How many parents today *specifically teach their children* about the sanctity of marriage, about the sinfulness of divorce, about the ghastly evil of child abuse, or the mental scars left by abortion? **Eph.6:4; Matt.28:19-** "*..teach them to observe...all I commanded..*"

b) It's **in the home** children learn about **WORK ETHICS** or the **PLAGUE OF LAZINESS!**

1 Thes.4:11- "*But we urge you, brethren ... to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you;*"

2Thes.3:10- "*For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.*"

c) It's **in the home** children learn about **MORAL VALUES REGARDING CAREERS:**

1) Doctors, Lawyers, Bankers, Car salesmen, Realtors, Preachers, et al --- **The same standard applies to the whole community! Matt.5:13-16.**

2) **MORALITY DOES MATTER! Col.3:8-10-** "*But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him*"

CONCLUSION:

OUR HOMES are not only setting examples in the communities in which we live! **OUR HOMES** are shaping the future of our country, **and the world**, because **TODAY'S PARENTS** are shaping tomorrow's **LEADERS**, and **FATHERS**, and **HOMEMAKERS**, and **VOTERS**, etc.

YOUR HOME is IMPORTANT! *Don't underestimate its potential!* What we do today will affect the lives of our grandchildren – do you suppose they're going to **ENJOY LIFE** or **SUFFER GREATLY** because of what we're doing today? **Psalms 78:5-7-** "*For He established a testimony in Jacob, And 29*

appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should teach them to their children,

6 That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, THAT THEY MAY ARISE AND TELL

THEM TO THEIR CHILDREN, 7 THAT THEY SHOULD PUT THEIR CONFIDENCE IN GOD, AND NOT FORGET THE

WORKS

OF GOD, BUT KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS,"

"FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS"

Gospel Meeting at Mack Road, Sacramento, California

8- What Are Our Responsibilities Regarding

Relationships In the World VS. Worldly Relationships?

1 John 2:15-17

INTRODUCTION:

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1. Why should we be concerned about distinguishing between our relationships **IN the world** and **WORLDLY relationships?**

a) Why would ONE be acceptable to God and the other one NOT?

b) What is the difference between relationships in the world and **worldly relationships?**

c) A good beginning point is with a definition: [**worldly: kosmikos - mundane, corrupt, worldly** (2886-Strong's). Thayer, p.356: "*having the character of this present corrupt age.*" -**Tit.2:12-** "*instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age!*"

2. **Worldly relationships** are those **relationships we have with the world** that would *deter our purity and focus in the sight of God: especially any DETERRENTS---*

a) Which would *cause us to disregard a pleasing relationship* with Him,

b) Which would *prohibit our having a proper status* IN Him,

c) Which would *keep us from functioning through an authorized organization* FOR Him,

d) Which would *forbid us from fulfilling our purpose* AS His people,

e) Which would *thwart us from sustaining efforts which would GLORIFY* Him,

f) Which *discourage REACHING FOR SUCCESS* through means that are both honorable and authorized!

3. The very fact that **WE SHOULD BE AWARE** and **MINDFUL** magnifies the importance of our situation in the world, doesn't it? *Our responsibilities include: Focus Allegiance Commitment!*

I. WHO ARE WE, RIGHT HERE, IN SACRAMENTO, TONIGHT: MAY 10, 1996?

A. We are GOD'S FAMILY here on earth -! **WITH REACHES [EXTENSIONS] INTO HEAVEN!** We have a **Divine relationship!**

1. It's easier for us to see that the BASIS of our **relationship with the Lord** is by an agreement called COVENANT, as we consider **WHEN (Heb.8:10)** He spoke of that relationship by saying: "*And I will be their God, and they shall be My people!*"

a) It was precisely WHEN He had made a COVENANT for us, as per **Heb.8:6-13**.

b) This COVENANT was in keeping with the promise that God had made with Abraham that "*in thy SEED shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" **Gen.12:3**. And the Bible interprets itself by explaining in **Gal.3:16**- "*Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is, CHRIST!*"

c) So **CHRIST**, the singular SEED, is the HEIR of that promise. That SEED is still SINGULAR, it's **CHRIST**, and so in order for US to be joint-heirs with Him and have part in the blessings that come by THAT SEED, we must have faith (**Gal.3:26**) and be baptized INTO CHRIST (**3:27**). **ONLY THEN** are we "*Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise!*" (**3:29**)

2. We're all aware that we can continue to be God's Family and remain as "*heirs according to the promise*" **ONLY if we stay focused on HIM!**

a) It's a lot easier to focus on God if we're SICK or DYING, isn't it, or even if we were able to stay all the time in a religious service such as this one!

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b) BUT we must ALSO see that we have to stay focused on Him through our OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES of life ! **THE GOOD TIMES!**

1) We must also be focused on our relationship with God as we involve in our OTHER REL.! to the end that our **OTHER ASSOCIATIONS** do not **DISSOLVE** our righteousness!

2) Understand that *we cannot be a part of any other relationship* that would thwart God's Cause, or dishonor Him, or ruin our **COVENANT FAMILY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM!**

3) Cf. In our relationship with our spouse – remember **Jno.14:15**

4) Cf. In our relationship on the job – remember **Jno.14:23**

5) Cf. In our relationship at school/ on the highway/ vacation – remember **1 Jno.5:3**

3. THEN AGAIN, if it takes **FOCUS** and **ALLEGIANCE** and **COMMITMENT** in order for us to be a part of that DIVINE FAMILY—

a) What are we **FOCUSED** on RIGHT NOW? [**Focus:** "*A center of interest or activity. A place where a particular activity or service is concentrated.*"]

1) Not on long robes & stoic appearances, which are just outward!

2) Strive to maintain a steady disposition, a feasible outreach, choosing ways to **SHOW LOVE!**

b) What truly has our **ALLEGIANCE** TONIGHT? [**Allegiance:** "*Loyalty, or the obligation of loyalty, as to a sovereign; faithfulness to obligations, duties, or observances.*"]

1) Business associate used to start each day with: "Good Morn. Mr. Wilson – what's the best thing you've got going today?"

2) Quest. Still pertinent RIGHT NOW! What's most important allegiance YOU have in your life tonight? "*Only one life, twill soon be past; Only what's done for Christ will last!*"

c) Where does our primary **COMMITMENT** lie THIS VERY MOMENT? [**Commitment:** "*A pledge to do. The state of being bound emotionally or intellectually to a course of action or to another person or persons.*"]

1) We have a **measure of commitment** to each relationship we have!

2) Which one is really most important to YOU? If NOT the Lord, still needing some work!

B. We are the people [earthen vessels] who are to carry the gospel to the Lost! We have a **Divine work!**

2 Cor.4:7- "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.*"

1. We remain the tools of His Cause only so long as we **STAY BUSY in HIS CAUSE!** cf.

Eph.2:10.

2. How can we tell if we're acceptably busy in His cause? **JUST CHECK OUR FRUIT!**

3. A **DIVINE WORK** cannot be **acceptably** interrupted by the MUNDANE, or by **WORLDLINESS!**

Jno.9:4. There are **two really adverse** affects of **NOT WORKING FOR THE LORD!**

a) **When we're NOT working** as we should for the cause of the Lord, we're usually fussing, feuding and fighting, which **even further** disrupts godly activity!

b) Also, **when we're NOT working** for the Lord no souls are being brought to salvation! [*It's been said that nothing settles problems like a few quick baptisms!*] Well, after all, isn't this

is our whole purpose in Christ? **Rom.7:4.**

C. We are the HEIRS of the Promises God made to His Faithful Ones! We have *Divine Expectations!*

Rom.8:16-17.

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1. In this fast-paced world we almost always have to *plan ahead* to get anything important into our schedules to get done, don't we?

a) What are you going to do after services tonight? Anything PLANNED? How about tomorrow? Tomorrow night? As is the case so often, in lieu of PLANNING, some of us just wait to see what's going to happen, don't we? Just "go with the flow," as the saying is!

b) **WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO AFTER THIS LIFE? Have you really PLANNED IT**, or just going to wait and see what happens?

2. What are you focusing on regarding your REWARDS? **WHAT** do you really anticipate you're going to inherit ETERNALLY?

a) It's pretty well answered relative to your allegiance, isn't it?

b) And it will only come through commitment! Just **sheer, hard-nosed, stick-to-it-tiveness commitment!**

c) But as we've already studied, it really comes as a matter of COVENANT RELATIONSHIP, doesn't it? *And it's only by covenant LOYALTY that we can anticipate the heavenly reward God has promised to the faithful!*

II. WHAT STANCE DOES GOD WANT HIS PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN IN THIS LIFE, IN ORDER TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE FOR HIS CAUSE?

A. Realize that the Kingdom/ Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is "*not of this world*," so we're not to get tied up with the temporal aspects of life! **Jno.18:36.**

1. In our very first lesson during BC on Sunday AM we read from the TEXT **WHAT WE'RE TO BE FOCUSED ON**, didn't we? **Col.3:1-3.**

2. Paul urged the Romans to keep on understanding the thought of, "**All that I AM, and All that I HAVE, I give to you**" in **Rom.12:1-2; Tit.2:12-14**- "*instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*"

3. And again, from Sunday's beginning text, Paul sets forth the righteous life-style of a Godly, **Covenant-related** member of the Family of God! **Col.3:12-15**- "*And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.*"

B. We understand that to STAY AWAY FROM WORLDLINESS, we must stay away from the EFFECTS of the world that would dilute our course of righteousness in serving Jesus Christ!

1. The Lord deemed it was urgent for us to KNOW, specifically, some of the WORLDLINESS we're to stay away from, if we're to be God's people! **2 Cor.6:17**- "*Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,*" says the Lord. "*and do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you.*" **1 Jno.2:15-17; 1 Thes.5:21-22**- "*Put all things to the test: keep what is good, and avoid every kind of evil!*"[GNMM]; **Eph.4:31**- "*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and*

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slander be put away from you, along with all malice." **5:11**- "*Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.*"

2. Can we see that there's a difference in **Isolation** and **Insulation**? We're **IN the world**, but we don't have to be a **part OF it!**

C. And we also understand that to walk "*in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake*" (**Psa.23:3**) we must be busy participants in the Family of God! GOOD CITIZENS in His Kingdom! Upright members of His Church!

And all of this helps us to relate successfully in reaching the lost--

III. HOW ARE WE GOING TO REACH THE LOST FOR CHRIST WITHOUT YIELDING TO INFLUENCES THAT WOULD BE SPIRITUALLY FATAL TO US?

A. ONE OF the responsibilities of this Divine Covenant Relationship we have with the Lord is for us to be messengers of that good news regarding the Christ – to those who are spiritually LOST!

Matt.28:19; Jno.6:44-45.

1. It's ESSENTIAL for us to reach out with the gospel – in lifestyle or friendship evangelism – we can't just wait for the lost to come to church, then try to excuse ourselves with: "**Well, Mike**

preached here every Sunday, they could have heard if they'd wanted to!"

2. We ALL must be into "*BUILDING BRIDGES TO THE LOST*" by establishing a basis of credibility through friendship and trust!

a) A deterrent for many is the attitude: "I can't be friends with sinners!"

b) For us to establish a relationship with the lost in order to reach them with the gospel, how many of their sins do we have to accept? NONE! We don't have to accept ANY OF THEIR SINS!

c) How many of OUR OWN sins do we have to accept of EACH OTHER? NONE, even though we ALL HAVE THEM, don't we?

3. The Lord's Church/Kingdom, the **Ship of Zion**, is in the sea of the world, but ***THE SEA IS NOT TO COME INTO THE SHIP!***

B. Another GREAT responsibility while reaching out to others is to maintain our own status with God, and this includes:

1. Making sure our responsibilities in other relationships are consistent with God's will, and this includes our fulfilling OUR responsibilities, keeping relationships pure, and properly functioning in our God-ordained roles!

2. *Personally aiming at and encouraging others to focus on* Godly service HERE and a Home in Heaven HEREAFTER!

C. A third vital responsibility regarding our relationship with God is for us to always **REMEMBER who and Whose we ARE, know WHERE we are** (we're still in the world – the domain of Satan) and to **NEVER FORGET WHY WE'RE HERE [to glorify God in ALL we DO!]**

CONCLUSION:

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How can we be protected from "worldly influences?" Let's put it like this, among other analogies, the CHURCH of the Lord Jesus Christ is like a great SPIRITUAL HMO, through which we can receive help and strength in this life, and IN which we can receive eternal life.

GOD, in and through His Son and by inspiration through those words the Holy Spirit directed to the apostles, HAS REVEALED everything we need to know how to live here in every relationship of life, and has told us everything we need to lay hold on that eternal life! **2 Pet.1:3.**