

Husbanding

by Abner Kauffman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the home and the need for husbands to take responsibility for their families, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in transforming lives.

Duration: 1:13:51

Scripture: Genesis 2:18, Ecclesiastes 1:10, Isaiah 28:23, Matthew 3:12, Matthew 6:33, John 16:13, Acts 17:19-21

Topics: "Husband"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the importance of taking care of our homes and families. He uses the analogy of threshing instruments to emphasize that each family is unique and requires different approaches to thrive. The speaker shares personal experiences and encourages the audience to not give up when facing challenges in their homes. He emphasizes the need to be a witness in our homes and to view our homes as a precious gift from God.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. What do you say to a group of husbands like this? I have appreciated very much the time that I had here, what the Lord gave me in this time here.

And I trust that I don't go home and lose it all, but rather let it change my life. I'd like to just draw a little something on the board. But before I do that, I'm sure that there's quite a few of you here.

Oh, okay, sorry. I'm sure that there's a lot of you here that know that song. It's a prayer and it's one that I often use.

I never get tired of using it. And I'd just like to all stand together and sing that song. We're just going to sing one verse of it in the chorus.

It's a song, I'm not sure what the title is. I think it's Open the Windows of Heaven. And it's a real meaningful prayer to me.

So could we just sing that together? Oh, heavenly Father and merciful Lord. We come to you now in one mind and accord. We are so... Be seated.

I know it's not going to help me to stand up here and say, well, why me for these two messages on the home? I just feel... I just feel... I don't know how to say it. But I'd like to today... I'd like to talk to the men. And I've titled the message Husbanding.

I don't know if there's a word like that or not, but I'm going to use it. Husbanding. And I got to thinking about when will I ever have the opportunity to talk to so many husbands? And I don't have to be afraid I will insult the wives because they're not here.

And I'd like to tell you young men, I don't know what you have as a vision of your life, but most of you, probably in the back of your mind, it may be pretty far back, sometime you want to be married. And I want you to listen today. And then tomorrow, I'd like to talk about the home.

Now, I have been asked many times through the years if I would preach on the home. And I know I will repeat myself, but brethren and sisters, it's a tremendous topic to me. I just love to hear a topic like Moe's had this morning and Denny's.

Those are wonderful. But I will not feel that this is any bit less in importance. I'm a family man.

Somebody at home told me one time, Abner, you put too much emphasis on the family. And I protested. Because I believe it's the family that's going to make the church.

And we can say all these things and our family be in bad shape. And I'd just like to do something here. That's it.

Until later. Ecclesiastes 1, verse 10 says, Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new. And maybe you'll sit here this afternoon and say, Well, that's not new to me.

And I believe it may not be new to you. I don't profess to be up here like Paul was on Mars Hill when the Epicureans and the Athenians came up there and they wanted to hear something new. I'm not here to satisfy your desire.

If you want to have that, go read the National Geographic. But I'd like to tell you, brethren and sisters, that sometimes we think we have things down pretty fat on this thing of the home. And God wakes us up.

He wakes us up. I'll give you an illustration. The Lord blessed my wife and I with a son and a daughter.

And I hope Kathy's not... Well, I know she's not here. But the third one I thought were doing pretty good as far as the training was going. I'm not going to speak of child training, but as far as the training.

And then God gave us Kathy. That was another story. And I believe that God has a way, if we have hearts that are right, that God has a way to show us through a lot of these complications of married life.

And so it says, Is there anything new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us. And I'm going to misquote a Scripture in the last part of Ecclesiastes, the last chapter, I believe it is, of making many

sermons on the home. There seems to be no end.

And much parenting and preaching can become wearisome. But don't give up. It's worth it all.

A large majority of professing Christians would say they are sincerely trying to develop their marriage according to biblical principles. And if that is the case, my dear brethren, why are there so many marriages? And listen, I am not going to give you a lot of statistics about what's going on out there. I am concerned about the homes of the men that are represented here.

Because if there's anything that is going to take the church on a downward road, it's if parents or if husbands do not take their place in being a husband. And listen, please hear me. I am preaching to myself.

I can say my race is pretty well run as far as the family is concerned. But I have not lost a heart for families in Christian circles and my grandchildren. But you know, I am convinced why I am more and more convinced, maybe I should say, why God did not give grandpa's little children.

I am terrible weak. I was weak as a husband of the father of the children. But my grandchildren, there's something there that just melts.

And I believe God knew what He was doing. He always does. And now this thing of being a husband.

You know, there's a lot of you people here who have a special job. And you took training for it. You went through training.

Maybe you're a truck driver and you had to get your CDLs and you had to go through training to get your CDL. Or maybe you're a machinist and you had to spend a lot of time in training to do those fine jobs. Just a host of those things.

But now we're talking about something. You know, we can succeed. And we're talking about something that we enter in and most of us had no training.

And now it can come out that you can either make a success of it or make a mediocre job of it or make a complete failure and lose everything that you have been working for. And that makes it serious. When my wife and I... And I'm going to use my family a little bit.

I know that when a man teaches on the home, he often puts his family... And my children know that. Dad, where were you preaching on the home again? Because they come some place and, oh, you're Abner Kaufman's daughter. And they want to know, what are you thinking? But I know I can't talk about your family.

I need to express what my wife and I went through. And we somewhat put our home up for people to look at. And that's not altogether wrong.

You know, when Moses and Demi are up here talking, I look at them and I say, do you really live what you're preaching? Well, this is how it is. And I'll tell you, we fall short, brethren. We fall short.

But I have a desire. And I have a desire to see this in homes. A lot of us entered this job recklessly.

I did. When I say job, please understand, I'm talking about being a husband. We entered it recklessly.

I was not converted. I can say this of a truth, what love I had as an unconverted person, I loved my wife. But it was a selfish love.

She will be good. I was like Samson. Get her for she pleases me.

It was a selfish love. I want her because she'll be good for me. And so we entered our marriage that way.

But you know, that's not God's plan. And I marvel at how He can take our messed up lives and shape something out of it. I was back here when Denny was preaching.

I was sitting back here going through some things and praying. And I thought, Lord, of all my father's sons, I was probably the most rebellious. And I was rebellious against my parents.

And I don't understand God. We have a son and six daughters. And they all love the Lord Jesus.

We're together in church and doctrine. And I hear some of these parents who walk with God and their children are scattered. And I say, Lord, what's going on? I don't understand.

And when I give you some of these things that the Lord laid in my heart this afternoon, I want you to understand, it's not the things that I did. I've got a wonderful wife. And I'm not saying it was everything she did.

But she contributed very much to the blessings that she and I have today. Very much. And so, we signed up for the job.

You know how it was. I could go up and down here and say, how did you sign up? Well, I went to my girl and I said, I'd like to be your husband. And she says, you're hired.

Well, maybe it was a little more romantic than that. But basically, that's what happened. Isn't it? You know, when I was preparing this message, I was trying to think, how did I ask my wife? I wasn't even sure anymore.

I was just sure I wanted her for my wife. And I don't think she said, you're hired. But she did hire me.

And so, we go through those things and a few months later, we report for work in front of the minister or the JP. And he says, let me see your resume. I don't have any.

What do you mean, your resume? You see in a lot of jobs, they want to know what's your experience. But we entered this job, brethren, and many of us that we could not really help it because what we knew about marriage was practically nothing. And what we did know, and I'm talking from my experience, what I did know, I got from the bad side of the railroad track and we presented ourselves there to the minister and said, well, we're ready to step into the job.

Do you wonder why we have a mess like we do? My wife and I were not converted. And I'm going to tell you something. I'm going to jump back to Moses' message a little bit, just if you'll bear with me.

Moses said about the determination. I know what it is to be a boozier. I know what it is to be so... I was never into drugs, but I was so tired of the tobacco habit.

And I know what it is. I did not throw my cigarettes down the toilet when I got converted. I didn't flush them down to the toilet.

I threw them in the field out behind my barn as far as they could throw, but watch where they go. Because I knew that an hour later, I was tremendously in bondage to those things. And what I'm trying to say is, Moses said, we can't let it up to God.

I got so desperate in my Christian life. You say, Christian? You weren't a Christian if you were smoking. I was a born-again child of God.

I believe I was. And nobody talked to me about some of these sins that I'm walking in. But I wanted to be clean for God.

And finally one day in my barn, I threw myself down on my face on a little barn with a horse and a cow. And I fell on my face down in that entryway. And I said, Lord, please, please, won't You take me like I am? I never smoked again.

Now you can say, well, did you do your part? I don't know. But I know that God did. I know that God did.

I had a marvelous deliverance from that, from my tobacco habit. No, I'm not ready there yet. I'd like to turn to Isaiah chapter 28.

Strange place to go. Some of you have heard me comment on this Scripture already. But it's a very dear one to me.

In Isaiah here, it's a very dear Scripture to me. This came to my heart some few years back. And when I thought of this, that I'm going to preach this afternoon, I thought, what can I do but use this? And I'd like to just quickly read this from verse 23 on.

And I'm going to use this verse to plead with you. Give ye ear and hear my voice, hearken and hear my speech. Now, as I look across the audience here, I don't know how many men are here.

I just know that I tremble when I realize the seriousness of what I would like to bring out to you men here this afternoon, and boys, it causes me to tremble. And I don't know how many of you are here, but I'm convinced, knowing God's beautiful plans of diversity, that there is all kinds of hearts here this morning, or this afternoon. There's hearts here that are just soft and tender.

They're ready for anything that God can give them. And if it was a group like this, there's probably some here that say, well, I've heard Abner preach on the home, and I don't know, just because he has these or that methods doesn't mean that's what I need to do. And then there may be some here that sit there and their heart is rigid.

It doesn't matter what you preach from the Word of God. My marriage is on the way down. I'd like to use this as a lesson for us.

It says, Does the plowman plow all day to sow? Does he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof. You farmers, you know what that means. He's plowed it.

Now he takes the hound, just smooths it out. That's how you plant. Some of us, maybe some of you don't know what farming is.

That's alright. Let's teach you a little this afternoon. But I'm not farming Lancaster County farms.

I want to farm some hearts here this afternoon. Now it says, Doesn't he take and make plain the face thereof? Doth he not cast abroad? Now hear me. Fitches, common, principal wheat, and appointed barley, and rye in their place.

And so you have these different seeds. Fitches, which is a very fine, tender-coated seed. And then you have the common, which is a little bit more than the fitches as far as the toughness of the husk.

And then you have the wheat and the barley and the rye. I don't want to take a lot of time here. Then it says in verse 26, For his God, the plowman's God, doth instruct him to discretion and doth teach him.

And I'm going to take the position this afternoon as the plowman. I'm called to scatter the seed. I'm called to sow the ground.

And some of you in here are fitches. Some of you in here are barley. You might not like that.

But bear with me. I'll give you a real name when I see your name tag. But some of you, some of you may be tough old brains.

Some of you it just takes a little to break. And yet, I'm going to preach this afternoon to you all in the same tone of voice, with the same words. And how is it going to work? Let's read on.

It says, For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument. Brethren, we're going to thresh this afternoon. But how do you thresh when you've got this whole mass of different seed by the Holy Spirit? You see, the Holy Spirit is able to take the Word this afternoon.

And though I may talk some strong parts of marriage, He can give it to you. If you're a fitch here, He can give it to you that you can receive it. But if you're a wheat, kernel hard, your huskies thick, the Holy Spirit can make a pounding in your heart this afternoon.

Why do I say this? Because I believe that the Christian home is one of the greatest, marvelous institutions that God ever gave man. I won't back down on that. I am convinced.

I am a homebody. I have traveled a lot. But I have never gotten over getting homesick.

I had to leave for the meetings this morning and my wife was on the way in. And she called and she was just a couple miles away, but we had to get here. And it hurt me that I had to get here.

I tell you, brethren and sisters, I'll say some of these things later maybe, but I do not understand these husbands who have taken a wife and they can so easily after a few years just be distant. I don't understand. But when I see a group of people like this, I wonder, how is it with you all? And then he tells us that the wheel is turned out upon the common.

The finches are beaten with a stab and the common with a rod. Those are threshing instruments. They're not all the same.

You would never thresh out a finch with the wheel of an ox cart. You would smash it to oblivion. And God... Oh, I like the last verse.

This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel. And I believe that when I talk about these things this afternoon, brethren and sisters, I want you to take these things and by prayer, take

them into your life. Take them into your home.

And if you have a problem, don't give up. Don't give up. Maybe the ox cart riveled you up something awful.

But don't give up. Because I believe one of the worst things that a child of God can do when his home is not like it is, like it should be, is give up. I tell you, brethren and sisters, and I don't want to keep saying this, but my wife and I do quite a bit of traveling.

And if there's anything that breaks my heart, it's when I see what's going on in churches. But do you know something? It's almost worse than what's going on in homes. And I probably will say, I said I wasn't going to speak about out there, but I probably will say that some of that concern that I have is really what is going on outside there, out there.

You know, it wasn't too long ago, I believe it was when my wife and I were going to Vienna in Canada, Albert, Canada. And it's the first time I saw the sign and I thought, where are we at as people? But I saw the sign in the back of a car and it said, a man plus a woman makes marriage. Now, if I ever saw a superfluous sign, it was that.

Well, what else makes marriage? That's where we're at, brethren and sisters. We're in that situation where people have to tell people that this is what makes marriage. God told us long ago.

And we're playing around with things like that. And you say, alright, Abner, now you're preaching from out there. I tell you, it's creeping into the church because we're becoming immune to these things and they're not so bad anymore.

And we need to wake up as fathers. We have young boys. You have young boys.

They're out there and they're getting caught and ensnared in some of these horrible thinking that's in the world. And we better be clear where we are. You better have your home a place where your children just love to be.

Alright, so we jumped into the deep water of marriage. And we tried to survive. My wife and I were married probably five years before we found the Lord Jesus.

And I don't understand it. We just talked about it just last week. My wife said to me, Abner, you know I hear people telling about their marriage before they came to Christ.

But she said, Abner, we never really had a lot of struggles in our marriage, did we? And all I could answer is, well, I guess not. But do you realize how selfish I was? How selfish. Now I'm going to finish this drawing that I have here.

And I'm not a drawer, but I hope you can understand what I'm drawing here. And some of you may have seen this before. But I came across it.

I don't know if I came across it or whether the Lord gave it to me. But here is something. You might have thought now that I draw a heart, I'm going to draw something real romantic.

You know, candle lights and roses. You know, I was raised an Amish boy. And I was a reader all my life.

And I had to do my reading with a kerosene light. And when I left the church and had electric lights, I've got a problem today yet. Snap the light.

I hate 40 watt bulbs. If I go to a store, I'll buy 100 watt bulbs. I like to see.

And then we come to couples night and everybody at home in the church knows that Abner is not romantically impressed by darkness. And so I could draw some different things up here in this heart to show you that marriage is what it takes. But I'm not going to do that.

I'm going to draw this. Oops, I got that wrong there. Because I believe it depends where your heart is.

That's what's going to make your marriage. If you are on the cross, if I'm on the cross, and my Lord Jesus Christ is on the throne, and Lord, forgive my poor drawing, but if that is happening, that's going to make the difference. But there's too many of us who have never come to that point where we were willing to get on that cross and allow the Lord Jesus to be the King of our life, and it's affected our marriage.

And I believe, brethren and sisters, unless we can see that truth, I'm going to erase it, but unless we can see that truth, we can go to all kinds of couples nights like they did when I was up in Vienna at their couples night. They asked my wife and I to eat off of one plate. Well, you know, that's not going to make me more romantic.

But a broken heart before God is going to make a tremendous difference. I know, because I was married and even after I was a Christian, I bowed my head in shame at my selfish attitude. And you know, selfishness comes from not being crucified.

And so, that's what I have to say. Husbands, where are you? In your heart, who has the throne? And who is on the cross? In your marriage. I know there's a lot of men, I'm not saying in here, but it could be some in here who would like to crucify their wife and say, well, if she was on the cross, our marriage would be happy.

I tell you it won't, because your very attitude tells me you're not on the cross. And that's the only way it's going to work. Husband.

Husbanding. Oh, how it's needful that we see the importance of that. What is a husband? I'm going to first say this.

I guess I'll ask a question. How have some of us survived so long? How have we survived in the marriage? I'm talking of the marriage. The husband and wife.

That's where I'm going to stay. You might get tired of it. You can leave.

I'm going to keep on preaching. You're going to take a girl, young man, and you're going to promise and commit yourself to her for as long as we both shall live. You better face the husband and wife thing.

You better face it. I didn't. And only the miracle of God that my wife and I come through as, I don't want to say unscathed, but come through as good as we did.

I know this. When we found Jesus, it got all better. And I just told somebody not long ago, I said, I can say of a truth in my heart that as I look back, my love was terrible shallow even in my early Christian life.

So cheer up, young man. It gets better all the time. I have no qualms in saying that.

In fact, I told my wife, I would a lot rather preach these messages if she could sit in here. Marriage is a wonderful thing. Now look across the audience.

And I say, it's not good. It's not good. And the Lord God said, somebody want to finish it? One person said, I'm hard of hearing.

That's exactly right. And the Lord God said, it's not good that the man should be alone. Why did He say that? Well, some people, especially confirmed bachelors say that too many preachers forget to put the word the in.

And so they say, He said to me, He said, you know what you preachers do? You get up front when you're talking to the married people and you say the Lord God said, it is not good for man to be alone. And that's not scriptural. He really shook me around.

But I tried it in my ministry back in the 70's. And I would go to churches and I would say, somebody quote me Genesis 2.18. Do you know something? Without fail. And I would always pick in the ministry and the churches where I was with then, they usually had them sitting up back there.

It was pretty easy to get on them. And so I would turn around and I would say, quote Genesis 2.18. And they would say, it is not good for man to be alone. I said, you flunked.

And so this went on until one time I was out in Ohio one time and I asked a young minister there to quote it. And he said, it is not good for the man to be alone. I said, well, you win.

You quoted it right. Then he raised his hand and he said, somebody told me that if Abner Kaufman ever comes to your church, you better get it right. Now, for the worth of that, I would like to tell you this.

I am not here to say that God did not mean Adam. But I don't believe He meant only Adam. And this brother that approached me, never married, and he felt it is his calling in life to be single.

And I will tell you, brother, if that is your calling, God bless you. I am not saying you have to be married. I am not saying you are missing something.

Now, wait a minute. I am not saying that you can't live a fulfilled life and not be married. But I know this.

He looked on Abner Kaufman and saw it was not good for him to be alone. That is how I feel. That is just to bring it out.

Now, what is a husband? What is a husband? Do you ever think about that? How many husbands are here? Raise your hand. What are you? Pardon? A leader. Very good.

Do you know what the word husband really means? That is exactly right. And I don't argue with you on your word leader. Please.

But husband means a keeper, a caretaker. It means a servant. Well, so much for the... We used to go down to Honduras a lot and they had this word, jefe.

Jefe. I don't know if there is anybody here who can talk Spanish or not. But they would say, I am the jefe.

There is a lot of husbands that that is all they think. I am the jefe. What that means is, I am the boss.

And I realize, brethren and sisters, if we are going to get fine-tuned in doctrine, I am going to come out and say, you are going to have to be the head. But that attitude that goes with that too many times has been a ruination. And tomorrow afternoon when I talk on the home, I do not believe, brethren and sisters... Oh, brethren, forgive me that.

But I do not believe that you and I can be the caretaker if we have this vision in our head that the buck stops here. Though it does. It does.

But that attitude has made many Christian homes a sorrowful mess. And I am going to speak against that. And yet, I don't want to take away what is really our responsibility.

You know, this is sort of a conflict. You think about the term a leader and a servant. That is what you need to be.

You think about the term a chief and just an Indian. That does work. You know? Think about the Spanish words concho and a peon.

That is what we are to be. And as I look at that, I see that unless we get clear in these things, you know, we are not going to have a vision for my... I won't have a vision for my wife and I. One of the most favorite verses when I talk or think about marriage and the husband's responsibility is this. Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing.

Now, there was a lot of hands went up here this afternoon. I would like to... No, I am not going to do it. But I would like to ask you, is your wife a good thing? Honestly! Now, you are here at the seminar and you know how to put up my hand.

But I am asking honestly. I tell you, brethren, what a glorious place to raise our families if you believe your wife is a good thing. This is a leadership men's seminar.

And you may go out from here and say, well, Abner just spiked us men. That's right. That's what I am going to do.

I am not going to talk about sister's role in this. Maybe a little tomorrow. But I want to bring it to focus that my responsibility, my home is my responsibility.

I know you say, well, what about your wife? Well, she is such a part of me. You know, one of the worst things that we get into our mind is we get the idea that Christian marriage is togetherness. It's not! Christian marriage is oneness.

And who is going to put down his own body? You know, when you get angry and you mouth your wife, or maybe inside you are full of resentment, you hate your own body. And the Bible says, no man has yet hated his own body. Do you know what the problem is? You are not one.

And the Lord God said in the beginning, they have become one flesh. And we need to understand that. This thing of an option that the world is handing out.

You have an option. If you don't love your wife, you've got an option. You have no option.

I get a little weary of the teaching, and yet I've taught it. You need to choose your wife. I mean, sorry.

You need to choose to love your wife. And every morning and every day and every mishap, you've got to re-choose again. I don't have to choose anymore to love my wife.

You say, well, how does it happen? I don't know. But I don't say, I'm going to choose to love her. Do you know what that means? I'm not saying that's wrong.

I mean, if you find your love floating on the way out, you better grab it. You're going to have to choose to love your wife. I know that.

But it's not ideal. It's not ideal. But neither is love that is just wishful roses and dark lights and all that.

That's not love. You're going to wear out of that. Couple's night is going to be over.

I told my wife one time when we were going, we've been in quite a few couple's nights, and I told my wife one time when we were going, I said, Anna, I love you. She said, we're going to couple's night. You know why? I found out that couple's night, they have a prophecy.

Who last, do you want to win a prize? Who last said to your wife, you love her? Oh, on the way here. That's cheating. My wife knew it when I said it.

I tell you, brethren, this is something that is real. And I'm going to speak in down, frank terms. Because sometimes, that's what we need.

And tomorrow when I speak in the home, I'd like to be just as open to you. And please, I have not found, I have not found the answer to all things. I was at a seminar some time ago when a brother, and I love that brother's teaching.

And he stood up in front of a group of 300 men. And he talked on the first seminar. Maybe some of you were there.

But the first one that he talked on was our love for God. And the one right afternoon was our love for our wives. He had courage, that man.

He stood behind the pulpit at the afternoon session, and he said, you know, women aren't very smart. But he said, they're about always right. And I mean, something sprang up in me.

I mean, my wife can come to conclusions by methods I know not of. But I'd better listen. I'd better listen.

I'll give you a story. My wife and I were driving home with our motorhome from Montezuma, Georgia about two years ago on Interstate 85. I'm not sure.

Is that 85? It doesn't matter. We were traveling on this interstate. And my wife was sitting on the passenger seat that I was driving, and she said, Abner, I think there's a noise someplace.

I hate when my wife does that. One thing, I don't hear very good. Another thing, I have a way of procrastinating something.

And she said, I hear a noise. I said, what do you hear, Abner? Well, it's just a noise. It's just a... Okay, but... No, I... You know, hey, please, I love my wife, but sometimes she comes to conclusions and things,

and I'm not quite ready to stop and look, see what's happening.

And so I drove on. A little further down the road, it's getting louder, Abner. Hey, 65, 70 miles an hour on the interstate.

And I said, well, what does it sound like? Well, I don't know. Yeah, okay, I... And after a while, I started to hear it. And hey, we had gone about 40 miles.

And then we came to an exit, and I said, Anna, I hear that too. I'm getting off. And we drove up the exit, and around, and stopped in at a little restaurant there.

And I went in and asked them, where's the truck garage? There's something wrong. I need to have a truck garage. And they told me where.

I went out, crawled in the motorhome, started it up, backed up, and the whole thing fell on the parking lot. The wheel, the wheel, the bearings, everything came off. If we would have been driving on the interstate, and that would have happened, oh, we praise God.

Never underestimate your wife. She may not know whether it's a wheel bearing or the muffler bearing, but listen to her. You listen to her.

Because many times, she has wisdom. I don't know how they get it, but they're often right. And it's been a tremendous help for me in my married life to come to that realization that my wife is no dummy.

And I think it's something we need to learn. All right. I need to get on.

I did not ask, and I didn't look. What time do they close here? Oh, here it is. Yes.

Okay. 310, right? Yeah. Okay.

We'll try to get there. Now, let's go back. I said, what kind of a husband are you? Now, maybe to get a balance and a focus on this, let's go back to our wedding day.

And I know there's probably a big difference on what happened on your wedding day. I hope it didn't happen what did to me. I about fainted.

I don't know what happened, but I was walking up to the minister. I just about didn't make it. We had a little different.

We didn't have a daddy-in-law to take us up. Oh, it's 250. Thank you very much.

Yeah. And so, there's a lot of difference. But here's something I want to tell you.

There's a lot of emphasis put on the gifts at the wedding. The things that they get at the wedding. But I'd just like to say that the greatest gift, the unique gift, the unreplaceable gift that you got on your wedding day was your home.

I don't mean the house. I don't care what kind of a house it was. My wife and I lived in very ramshackle house for years.

But we had a beautiful home. I'm talking of the gift of the home. And I tell you, there's something in me that wants to stir when I see this young couple starting out and maybe they take a voyage to Hawaii or someplace like that to spark their home.

Don't do that. I'm not saying don't go to Hawaii. But don't lean on that as being the ultimate.

You've got many, many more beautiful things as a husband, as a young husband. And I'm just talking to those young men. How do you look at your home? We used to have a man that would come around when we were farming in Bedford and he had his legs cut off down here at his knees.

And he was a dirty mess. He stank. He was just... But he would come to our farm and somebody would drop him off.

He had a couple of short crutches. And I used to put him up there. And he wanted to sleep in the barn.

That's what he wanted to do. And we would feed him. And he would stay around for maybe a week, sometimes two weeks.

An old man, he was nothing clean or Christian about him. But my heart went out to that old man. And when I was studying on this message, I thought of something about old Bill Smith.

That's what his name was. One day he came there and it was in the dead of winter. And it was cold.

And Bill asked if he could stay in my barn. I said, Bill, you'll freeze. No, I won't freeze.

I said, I'm not going to put you in the barn. I'm going to put you in the house. And I mean, this fellow was filthy.

And I took him in and we had a bedroom. And you say, well, I'm sure you don't clean the bedroom. Well, my wife was with me in it too, though she did question it a little bit.

But I took him into this room. And I'll never forget. I walked out of the room after I told him.

It was heat there. There was a bathroom. It was like a little apartment.

And I told him where the things are. And I said, now you make yourself at home, Bill. We'll bring you something to eat.

I'll never forget. And this came to my mind when I was studying for this message. When I was just walking out the door, I was closing the door.

And Bill stood there in his little cut off. He used to wear like big heavy leather boots on here. And he was just little because of his legs being off.

And he was standing there and he looked around the room and he got a big smile on his face. That's how he did. Just looked around the room like this.

And you know, when I thought about how our home should look, I thought of old Bill Smith. It wasn't all that pretty a room. But to him it was the most beautiful thing that he had seen for a long time.

And I ask you, how do you look at your home? You see, brethren, unless you and I look at our home as one of the most beautiful things that God gave us, we're not going to take care of it. We're not going to do what it's doing. We're going to become sloppy and careless.

And finally, we like it better how it looks down at the neighborhood coffee shop or over at McDonald's or down at some restaurant or at somebody else's place. And I protest to you husbands, that's not where you belong. I'm not opposed to going to a coffee shop if needs be.

But I see this happening over and over. Men out there down there, maybe your wife should get a job as a waitress so that she can feed her loved one. I'm not opposed to doing this if maybe you have to drive 300 miles and you want to stop for something to eat.

I'm not talking of that. How does your home look to you? No matter what the home looks like, no matter what the financial status is of this home, you can have a beautiful home. Now, I'm going to confess to you, my wife and I live a little on a different scale than what we did 30 years ago, 40 years ago.

We were farmers and we hardly knew how to make ends meet. But I tell you, brethren, and maybe I have an exception, but I never heard my wife complain. And we lived in a house that was a cold, ramshackle house.

Then we moved to Bedford, we had a little better house. And then not long ago we sold the old house because it's right along the highway and built a new one. And my wife has a beautiful house now, I know that.

But when I wanted to build this house, I'm the type of fella, I would have built a cracker box, you know. As long as I could have my things inside. But I said, Anna, I'd like you to tell me what we want to build.

And I'm not putting the blame on her what we have now, but she has a beautiful home. She has a beautiful home. But that hasn't changed our home.

It has not changed our home. And too many times our focus is on something like that and that's supposed to change our home. Some man will build his wife a house because that might make her happy.

Let me tell you something, it won't. She still has to live with you. And maybe you're still not on the cross.

You say, but wait a minute, you don't know my wife. I don't need to know her. I am convinced, well, I better not say that.

Because I know what my wife has done in my marriage and I just don't want to say this. But I believe that it's when we start taking this marvelous gift and take it for granted that we have problems. We may not.

I've been married almost 46 years now. And there's a lot of people been married longer than that. But to me, the marriage is still the most precious thing besides my salvation.

That's how I feel. It's just a wonderful thing that God... And maybe I'm going to get some of you young boys all hepped up, but I don't care if I do. Just do it in the Lord.

Don't try what I did. You might not come out that good. I did no better.

Alright, now we're married. And now we have a home. And the honeymoon is over.

The honeymoon is over. Now we start going to work. And, oh, it's good to go home.

Because my young bride is at home. And then the Lord blesses us with a child. And a year and a half later with another one.

You're still going to work. I'm taking it for granted somebody was working. And then you go home again.

And now you're tired. And the day's work is done. And my wife didn't do anything but be at home here all day.

I'll tell you something. I am an awful poor Mr. Mom. And I believe a lot of you are the same way.

And one of the poorest areas is we don't realize what our wives do. We have little Betsy and, oh, she's just so wonderful to hold. But, you know, I've got to go to work.

And I think she needs attention, Mom. I've got to go to work. Hey, that's real life.

You better face it. You who had these dreams that your wife is just going to always welcome you with open arms and find out that she's back in the bathroom with a little boy trying to get some things straightened up and not welcoming you home. That's going to happen.

It's when, how do some say, the rubber meets the road. That's where it comes. And now, so this home that was to be a refuge for safety for my wife and children has become tension.

It has become tension. Do you know whose fault it is? Sure, you know. You know.

Whose fault is it? We used to have a bake shop. And for years we... And I worked in the bakery with my girls. I have six daughters.

And one morning we were working together. And I had a habit of singing and whistling. And one morning it was due to church things.

Well, no, I can't blame it on that. But I was weighed down. And I was working in this bakery.

And one of my daughters said to me... No, I said to one of my daughters, What's going on? I don't hear any singing. Do you know what she said to me? She said, Dad, oh, it made me think of the children of Israel and the banks of the Babylonian River. She said, Dad, how can we sing when you're not happy? That smote me.

I believe, fathers, it is your, my responsibility to control the atmosphere in the home. You have no right as a husband. You say, well, but you don't know the problems I'm going through.

I understand. But we have no right as a husband to walk around making our home a gloomy place. You say, but I didn't feel happy.

Well, act happy. Well, then I'm a hypocrite. Well, then get straightened up.

If you're a hypocrite, you need to repent. I tell you, brethren, we are responsible for the attitude in the home. I'm going to hit some places tomorrow that may not be funny.

Because I believe this reaches in. And I have failed. Brethren, please don't look at me and come to me and say, well, you've got the answers, Abner.

I know, I know. The love of the Lord Jesus Christ in my heart is the answer. I know that.

But, you know, sometimes we're just not as loving. That love isn't as real and vital as what it ought to be. And so I leave room for that.

No, I don't leave room. I'm just trying to say it. So I'm asking again.

And here's something I'd like to tell you. Did you ever hear the statement made, the proof of the pudding? All right. My question to you is, what's the proof of the pudding? Maybe that's Greek to you.

That's an old-fashioned saying. All right. Let's take, for instance, let's make pudding.

You make a pudding. You have these different people want to make a pudding. Some of you men want to make a pudding.

I don't want to eat them, but let's say we do. All right. Now, here's a pudding, and it comes out, and it's beautiful clear.

Just like a pudding ought to look. Over here's a pudding, and it's got some lumps in it and so on. And over here's another pudding.

You know, all kinds of pudding. But the old saying was, the proof of the pudding is not in the pudding, but in the eating. You follow that? You see, that's how it is with our marriage.

That's what it proves to us as husbands. The proof of your marriage is not in how it looks, but it's what the children, the wife, are getting out of that pudding. I tell you, brethren, this afternoon, I believe if there is anything that ought to draw our daughters and our sons after they're married and gone, is the memories of home.

And not negative. Beautiful memories of home, so they can build their home. We have a tendency as men, young men, to build our home on the example of how our father built it.

And sometimes that's good, and sometimes it's bad. We have a tendency to become what we hated in our father. My father had a tremendous voice.

He could raise my mother in the house from way away. And my father was a disciplinarian. And there was no question who was the head of the home.

No question. I became very reactionary to that. But do you know after about three years of marriage that I, to my shock, when I got converted, I found out I'm following right in my dad's footprint.

I can also holler. I can also put forth a lot of oomph. Now, I don't want to say I didn't, but I tend to think that I didn't have the anger quite that my father did.

But I was following in his footsteps. And you know, those things that we hate the worst, often becomes a part of our pattern. And all God wants to do is to start us in a new person, a new life.

And in that marriage, that's what He wants to do. He wants to take this... Do you realize that these homes that I'm talking about this afternoon is not solely for our happiness? That's part of it. But God wants to use them to witness for the world.

That's why He likened the marriage to Christ and the church. He wants to use it to witness to the world. We used to have boys that went to college in State College, Pennsylvania.

And they would come down over the weekend. When my wife and I were... Michael, I guess he's up with the ministers there. But when he was maybe 9, 10, 11 years old, and these boys would come from the college down to go to our church.

And we were a Mennonite church. And we were rather dry. And these boys... I remember one especially was a Pentecostal or a Charismatic or something like that.

And a nice boy. And he went to our church. And then we would take these boys home sometimes.

I remember this one boy. He came to our home. He was in our home.

And I don't say it because it's my home. But just to try to tell us something. He went there and he was in our home.

And we had Sunday noon meal together there. My family was together. And our habit was we did a lot of singing in our home when the children were small and as they grew up.

And I said, we want to sing some songs. And we were walking out. And this boy wanted to go back to college.

He came up and he put his arm on my arm. And he said, you know Abner, your church is awful dry. But your families are something else.

You think you're a witness? Be a witness in your home. There's lots of people out there that are fascinated at people with a family. You just take your family... I'm sure many of you have done that.

Going to Walmart. And you're not constantly smacking your child's hand to stay out of the shelves. And they look at it.

And they say, how can you do this? Because just down the aisle... I was in a... My wife and I stopped at a fast food place some time ago. We were traveling. And there was this little boy and his daddy in this place.

And they were eating. And it was a ruckus for one boy and the daddy. But, you know, I dismissed myself.

It's no part of me. And then I heard the boy say something I'll never forget. He told his daddy at the height of their argument.

He was about seven, eight years old. He said, you wait till I get you home. Now, did you hear me right? The boy told his daddy.

Brethren, I am persuaded better things. I am. I'm not necessarily going to do a lot of talking and child training.

But I believe when the husband's place and the wife's place are right in the home, those children have a tremendous step given to them to go on in a world that's full of problems. Because they know how to order their ship. And they have a security that all of us really need.

They need that. Now, what's the proof of the pudding? I believe the proof of the pudding in a marriage is relationship. Now, I could talk about the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in your wife.

And I'm just taking for granted that if you're here at the seminar, you're one of those that does that. But I tell you where I failed in my marriage was in relationship. Do you know why? Do you know what one of my greatest problems was? And I'm not convinced it's crucified like it ought to be.

And that is my love for books. Do you know, do you and I understand that Jesus Christ did not come here on this earth to be respected? He didn't come here on this earth for prestige. He came to be a servant.

And a servant is one who will give time. His things aren't important. And that's what can make relationships.

And I failed. I remember soon after we were married, I worked at Harrisburg State Hospital, mental institution. And I had just gotten married a little before.

Well, my wife came to me there at the state hospital. And we lived in a little trailer. It was only 8 feet wide and 32 feet long.

We lived in this trailer. And I was not a Christian. I went into the Harrisburg library and joined up to the library.

Dropped my arm of books, you know, and went home. Sat down in my little trailer and I was happy. You know why? Because selfish, uncrucified me had what he wanted.

I had a home, a dear, sweet wife that I loved in the way I could, and books. And I was reading a book one Sunday when I was off of work. And my dear young bride, I heard something.

Of course, the trailer was small. And so I jumped up and I went to see where she sat. And she was back in our little bedroom and she was crying.

And I about panicked. What's wrong? What's wrong? You know what she said? I'm lonely. I'm lonely.

Oh, God forbid. And brethren, I'm going to tell you something. There's a lot of people who have wives that are lonely.

They can be amidst a crowd of children. You can be in and out of the house. But they're lonely.

They're lonely. You know a wife is especially... to her, relationship is especially important. My wife like... and I know this and I don't always do it.

My wife just loves if I go walking with her. Does that help her walk faster? No. Does she do it because she sees that I need some trimming? Well, that might be some part of it.

But I believe basically it's the companionship. And value that. We hardly ever go away that she doesn't go with me.

Except, you know, around town at home or so. But loneliness can just be a horrible thing. You know, I came across something and some of you have heard me say this, but I was reading one day and I came across something that was very interesting.

John the Revelator was a man who loved fellowship. He loved brotherhood. He loved people.

You don't have to read long in the epistles and in the book of John before you see that. He just loved it. And then when God took John and put him on the isle of Patmos, there was no fellowship except his visions.

And I don't know how much time went on there. I'm not sure. It doesn't tell us.

But there he was on an island. And out around him was the sea. And it kept him from fellowship.

He couldn't fellowship. Do you realize? And brethren, I want us to see our home like this. Your home can be what you vision it to be.

And so John, when God finally gave him that vision in Revelation chapter 21, and I came across that here some years ago, and I was puzzled because it says that John saw the heavenly Jerusalem come down and a new heaven and a new earth. And then he makes a strange statement. And I was puzzled until it all fell together.

And there was no more sea. I believe, brethren and sisters, that heaven is going to be everything we desire. And the things on this earth that were killing to us will not be there.

But I believe our home can be no more sea. Because relationship, oneness, that oneness, oh, that oneness that we need in our marriage. You know, people get up and preach.

Mos talked about, and I was sitting back there and saying, Mos, say it. And I know it's not really that big an issue, but I for years have had a struggle with these people that say that Paul had crucified the flesh daily. I'm going to let that up to Mos if he wants to say more about it.

But I had a struggle with that because I saw it was taken completely out of context. But I'm going to tell you something else that can irritate me a little bit. And that's when a man... Ed, are you sitting back there? I'm going to tattle on you.

That's when a man or when a preacher gets up and says he's white or the wife is a help meat. That's not proper. You should say the wife is the help.

Eden does that, supplies that, that you need. And maybe we're too proud to say that, so she says she's my help meat. That's not proper English.

That's not proper Bible definition. Those words don't belong together. Yes, they do.

But it means, and let me say it in my words, as I studied that out, it means she is the help that God gave me that will supply the needs that I have. That's what it means. Now the reason I said to Ed, he pulled a real trick on me some time ago.

And I'm glad he did. Came out very good. I was coming home from church.

My daughter Anna Joy had come home from Haiti. And she had been in Haiti for five and a half years. And then we were sitting there at home from church.

Had some visitors there and the telephone rang. It was Brother Ed. And I'm not going to quote the words exactly.

But he said this. He said, Brother Abner, I got a problem. You know how Ed talks.

I got a problem. I said, so what's your problem, Ed? He said, I got some boy here that needs help. I was stumped on it.

I said, what do you mean he needs help? I thought he needed spiritual help. Well, he said he needs help. I said, so, okay, so what can I do? I mean, well, he needs to help me, he said.

I've got a son-in-law by the name of Gary. I hope he's not here. And he's been a beautiful son-in-law.

I love him. But I just want to say that for what came to my mind. Oh, it's time to close.

Brethren, I'd like to go on tomorrow. I didn't really finish today. But I'm not going to go back because the message tomorrow to me is a very important one.

But before I sit down, please, I would like you to consider the seriousness of your, may I say, employment as a husband in the home. I know, it was Dr. John Rice. Years ago, I read that, how that he was in a church and he was talking.

He was very much of a family man. If any of you remember reading John Rice's writing, he was very much a family man. He was having meetings in a church one time.

And there was a family that came the first night, sat in the back pew. And every night after that, they moved up, up, up, up. And the night that he talked on the family home, they were sitting in the second row.

And John Rice got talking on the family. And he said this. He said, any of you husbands that don't take your place in the home are... And he stepped down on the first bench.

And he pointed his finger down at this man. He said, are a parasite in the community. And the man just... And he got up and walked out.

And the deacon came to the minister, the pastor, came to John Rice after services. And he said, you did it now. He said, that man hasn't been in church for years.

And now he's come. And he came all the way up the front. And you scared him out.

John Rice said this. But he knows the truth. And the story said that that man became one of the staunchest pillars for the Lord Jesus Christ because of that.

Why? Because he took seriously his role as a husband. And I believe we need to do that. Forgive me if I thrashed you and you're a fitch.

I didn't mean to do it. But I meant to wake us up, all of us, including myself. May God bless.

I'm going to turn the time back to whoever's in charge.

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