

The Blueprint of Your Home

by Abner Kauffman

Abner Kauffman's sermon outlines the necessity of having a strong, Christ-centered blueprint for building a healthy home and family life.

Duration: 1:11:56

Scripture: Deuteronomy 24:5, 2 Kings 4:10, Proverbs 14:1, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 3:19, 1 Peter 3:7

Topics: "Home Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of studying the Bible to show oneself approved by God. He encourages listeners to not neglect learning about their homes and the responsibilities that come with it. The speaker warns against the dangers of watching inappropriate videos and allowing worldly influences into the home. He also advises husbands to take responsibility for what their families are exposed to and to address any issues or tensions in the household promptly. The sermon highlights the significance of the kitchen as a place where husbands can play a role in creating a godly atmosphere in the home.

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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And God, you smoke me. I know I love my home, Lord. I love my children.

But God, my priorities were not always right. Thank you for speaking to me. And God, I pray that you would speak to us this afternoon.

O Lord, let it be a simple, plain, what could I say, Lord? Just a simple, plain message. You know the battle I have with pride at times. God, take that away and break my heart and humble me for the glorious things

that you have done.

In Christ's name, amen. You may be seated. I would like to get started very quickly.

I have something I'd like to talk this afternoon. And I tend not to be able to put it together like I'd like to, to make it concise. But my brother here is going to put something up in the front here.

And some of you may have seen this already. I don't know. But I'm making no apologies.

I'd just like to use this as a sort of a guide to us. If you would turn your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 24, I'm going to speak on the blueprint of your home. And I use the word your carefully.

Before we read this scripture, I'd like to tell you a little something. I debated this forenoon as I was sitting back here whether I should say it or not. And I just felt that I had to say it.

My wife and I, as I said yesterday, I'm not sure whether I said it here or whether I said it in my prayer group, but my wife and I are in a business at home. And we wanted to build a new home because somebody had asked to buy our home where we lived in. And on our property, we wanted to build a new house.

And knowing that my wife had been very patient, the days we were farming in Mifflin County, we had bought a farm up there just to get through this very quickly, which the house was in very poor shape. The only insulation we had was bird nests because of the holes that the birds could crawl in. And we bought a poor farm because when I was converted, my father disinherited me so I didn't have any, like some former Mennonites, I had nothing to go back to and I had to come up with something.

And I wanted to farm and I bought this farm. My wife and I did a very cheap farm. The ground was pretty run down and the buildings were in terrible shape.

And we moved on there and moved into this little house. And my wife, being the beautiful person she is, it was good enough for her. And we lived in that.

And the Lord led us on to the point where we came where we are now in Bedford County. And I told her, well, I said, let's build a new house. And I'm not a builder.

To me, a house is something... The home is the thing that to me is important. But you know, our wives, they like a nice house. Now, what I did is I went and got some blueprint books from Lowe's Lumberyard.

I don't know if you know what they are or not. Surely some of you do. And I got a blueprint book and I took this to my wife and the daughter that's living at home with us.

This was just a year and a half ago or so. And I told my wife, I said, Anna, I would like you and Violet to look in this book. I don't know much about it.

And find something in a decent price range where you feel the layout is what you would like to have. And then I'd like to get some builders to build this. And they did that and I looked at the pictures.

And yeah, it's nice where I could put... This is the living room, here's the kitchen. But I didn't realize... I didn't realize... You know, the Bible says who's going to build a counter, a tower and not count the cost of it. I preached a message at home not long ago.

And the title of my message was, what does it cost to be a disciple? Well, going back to my house, I looked at this and I thought, well, that looks pretty grand. So I got the carpenter and I showed him the figures here. Of course, being the carpenter, he knew exactly what it is.

I mean, I showed him the blueprint that was in that book. And he said, yes, we can build that. I said, well, go ahead.

And when he started putting the trusses on that house, I said, what am I doing? I mean, the trusses were every which way. And my idea of a nice house is a square house with a roof and not a whole lot of complications. And I'm not that stupid.

I had seen that the rooms were a little like they are, but I had no idea this thing was going to look like this. And I'd like to tell you something. There's a lot of us people that start with our homes and our blueprints are entirely wrong.

Now, we're living in the house and we like it. But it's just a little more house than I really feel we need. Maybe I'm making a confession.

You know, we are told that we're to be strangers and pilgrims and a lot of us are just strange pilgrims. That's all we are. And I look at this thing and it's something that I've learned to live with and I live in it.

But I would like to this afternoon, as quickly as I can, because I have a race with that clock. But I'd like to tell you that I believe you and I as husbands, as fathers, need to have a blueprint in mind. We need to have a goal.

We need to have a vision for our home. I'm going to read you something. And this is the work of God.

A brother came to me in the break, in the lunch break. I wasn't up in the eating part. And so he came to me and he said, Brother, he said, I have something I'd like to give you.

And when I read that I thought, oh, what a message. Listen to this. This is not mine.

Yes, I'm going to claim it now. What's the problem with our world? We have a weak nation because we have a weak government. We have a weak government because we have weak society.

We have a weak society because we have weak people. We have weak people because we have weak churches. We have weak churches because we have weak families.

Is that enough? No, brethren. We have weak families because we have weak fathers. Oh, please, Abner, you gave me enough yesterday, not more today.

We have weak fathers. And brethren, I'm going to tell you this afternoon, my home, as I look back, and the turmoil of earning a living and having little children one after the other, and being poor and struggling in some of these things, it can take your vision of your home and destroy it unless it's planned and solid in Christ Jesus. Now, God is able to do marvelous things with your home.

Don't be discouraged. I had some marvelous, or some, I don't know what to call, blessed responses from the message yesterday afternoon. And I hope the brother that's here will bear with me.

I'm not going to say your name. But he said, Abner, I'm scared to get married. I blessed him.

What a way to start. But these young men that think they got it all packed together and they got it all together and this is how my marriage is going to be, I say, ooh. You know why? Because there are so many hidden areas that we don't know about.

And so when a brother comes to me like this, I am encouraged. I am encouraged. All right, we need to get going.

Deuteronomy chapter 24. What do you want in your marriage? Listen to this. Verse 5, When a man hath taken a wife, a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business, but he shall be free at home one year, and listen, shall cheer up his wife.

I didn't do that. I don't know if you did. I tried to cheer up my wife.

I blew that somewhat. But I tell you, brethren, I believe this is still a beautiful recipe, if I may use that carnal word, for us in the marriage. Now I'd like to turn to another one that I found in Ruth chapter 1. I'd like to read this one in Ruth.

And I want these to stay with us today because I'm giving you the choice. No, I'm not giving you the choice, but I'm showing you what can happen. In Ruth, we have this.

Before we read it, I'm going to ask you a question. What does Marah mean? Bitter. That's right.

Now let's read this. We have the account of Noah, of Neomah coming with her daughter-in-law's Ruth and Orpah, coming back, going back to... And as they went, it says in verse 19, until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass when they were come to Bethlehem that all the city was moved about them.

And they said, Is this Neomah? And she said unto them, Call me not Neomah. Call me Marah. For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Neomah? I'd like to ask you fathers, do you want to be called Marah because of the situation of your home? I have three daughters, and a lot of you know it. My three oldest... I have six daughters, but my three oldest daughters all lost their husbands.

My oldest daughter lost her husband. They were missionaries in Honduras. She picked up a disease there, and he died.

He was 34 years old. My second daughter and her husband were sent to Africa, Liberia, Africa, and he wasn't over there very long before he got a tremendous headache, and they sent him home, and he had a tumor in his brain, and he died. My third daughter, in age I'm saying, he was 39.

My third daughter lives here. They went to church here, and he had a problem with his heart, and one morning my daughter called me. She said, Dad, Daddy's not breathing anymore.

He died. Now, I have a choice as a father. Three times God gave me this test.

Am I going to be able to call my daughters Naomi? Or am I going to call them Myra? You have a choice, brethren. You don't have a choice how your things and situations are going to happen in your marriage. Yes, you do to some extent.

But you have a choice in the things that happen in your marriage to be called Myra or Naomi. You have that choice. My wife and I, and praise God my daughters, have taken the choice.

Bless God. And I know that every one of my daughters loved their husbands. They had a good marriage.

And today I say this because this is a men's group here. My daughters aren't here. But I am so blessed at how my daughters, not without tears, not without coming to Daddy sometimes, but how they face life.

Naomi! Instead of Myra. And I want you this afternoon as we go through this home, I would like us all to realize that it's not irreparable. Your home may be a mess.

I don't know. And I want you to... And I'm going to say something quickly. I'm not an architect.

I just drew what I would call a blueprint here. And I'm going to go through those rooms and through those things here. I'm in no sense, am I trying to tell you, that you follow the things that I teach this afternoon.

You know, we have back here, and I tell you brethren, it's hard for me to come in here in this building and preach about the home when I know that back there is the Godly Home Series. And it's hard for me when I realize that there's all kinds of writers writing about marriages and homes and things like that. And I look at my home and the messes I have made.

It's hard for me. And yet, it's a gladness that I do it. Because maybe you can learn from some of my mistakes that I have made.

And something else I'd like to say, lest I forget it. Don't go copying the... Denny, please hear me out. Don't go copying the Home Series.

Don't go copying Michael Pearl. Don't go copying Larry Christensen and whoever else. Copying to the extent that you're going to set them on a pedestal and you're going to do just what they did.

It will not work. I try to tell young families that. You know, sometimes a preacher gets up and a young preacher came to our church years ago.

And he was a fireball. And somebody told him, you're imitating so-and-so. I'm not going to say who he was trying to imitate.

And he came to me weeping. He said, what should I do? I said, you be yourself. Don't you listen to those people.

Yes, you listen to them, but don't let it affect you. And brethren, I'm going to tell you that this afternoon. Your children are uniquely yours.

Something I want to say quickly. I don't want to talk about child training. I'm going to hit some of it.

But your children are uniquely yours. Your home is not Abner's old, hatted, crazy blueprint up here. It's a complete other home.

But maybe we can take some lessons. You know, maybe we can... Oh, I tell you, you know what I thought? I sat here this forenoon and I was so blessed by these messages and so condemned. And I thought, now, Abner, you're going to get up there and talk about the home and spoil it all.

And then, just out of curiosity, I turned back to... I use the Thompson Chain Reference. And I turned back to the Thompson Chain Reference and something... God showed me something. Do you realize... I'm just saying it for what it's worth.

That the topic of the home in the Thompson Chain Reference eats up five pages. Back in the references. The topic of the Holy Spirit eats up one and three quarter page.

Is it important? I was intended to think, you know, in a gathering like this, shouldn't we? And I love to preach about Jesus Christ. And here I'm going to preach on the home. And then God said, Abner, that's important too.

And I believe it is. But I was tempted to feel that I'm getting second best out here to you, brother. But I don't want to do that.

Alright. Let's look at your home. Dr. Campbell Morgan.

I read one time. And you'll have to forgive me. I do a lot of reading.

I get confused with the author sometimes. But I think it was Dr. Campbell Morgan's father said or when he wrote that when he and his wife got married, they got this little house to live in. You know how it is.

My wife and I, I told you yesterday, had this little trailer at Harrisburg State Hospital. And you know, it's not much, but it's ours. It's ours.

And so Dr. Campbell Morgan says that he was so happy with his home and his father came to visit him. And then his father took a walk. Oh, he said, Dad, I want to show you our house.

And he took him all the way through the house. And when he came out to the front door again, he said, Dad, what do you think of my house? Well, he said, Son, it's very interesting. It's very interesting.

But he said, You know, son, if a person would come into this house who would not know that you are a child of God, what did he see in here that would show that you are a child of God? And Campbell Morgan said later, or wrote later, that it just deflated his balloon. And I tell you, brethren and sisters, if your home does not show Jesus Christ, and I'm not talking of your house, I'm talking of your home. If your home does not show Jesus Christ, and you can run home after tomorrow and put all kinds of mottos and stuff on the wall.

That's not what I'm talking about. Though they are good. But your home, and your home can be a shack or it can be a big mansion.

I'm not critical. But if your home does not show Jesus Christ, it may show that you love back-to-earth people. It may show that you don't like anything, no flowers around.

It may show that you want a cheerful house. But if it doesn't show Jesus Christ, you're cheating someone. I'm talking of our life in the home.

Alright, let's go on. Oh, I've got so many... I shouldn't sit in a seminar like this before I preach, because I get so many things coming. When Brother Denny talked about a flight, going on a flight, and here's something I've told other people about this, but it was such a shocker to me.

I was flying from Houston one time, home from Houston a few years ago, and there's this young girl come on the airplane, sat down right next to her designated seat was next to me. She was 18 years old. You say, how do you know? Because I ask her.

I like to talk. And I don't like to sit in a flight and stare at movies or stuff. I like to talk to somebody.

And so she sat beside me. And we were going a little bit, and then I asked her, I said, where is she going? And she was a very friendly girl. And she told me, well, she's coming back from El Paso, and she was out there with her boyfriend who was in the army.

She was out there with him for the weekend. And I said, oh, I see, I see. And then I said, are you a Christian? Do you love the Lord Jesus? And she just looked down.

And this has to do with Moses' message this morning. She looked down and then she said, you know, sir, when I was a little girl, I was five years old, I went to Sunday school, and my Sunday school teacher said that if we raise our hand for Jesus Christ, we will never have to go to hell. And she said, I guess, I guess that's, I guess I'm, does that make me a Christian? I tell you, I got a vehement righteous, I hope it was righteous, indignation at that topic that brother Moses was hitting this morning.

Now, I believe we people need to be careful. I don't want to get sidetracked from the home. We need to be careful because we tend to get off balance and the sovereignty of God is lost.

But I tell you what, and I had a talk with that girl, and then she was just so open. And then she said this. She said, are you a married man? I said, yes.

I said, I have seven children. Hey, that's not much. I found out this week.

My dad had 14. And I know there's some God is blessed with more. You hear what I said? God is blessed.

I want to hit that today a little bit. We have seven, I told her. And she said, how long were you married? And at that time it was 41 or something like that years.

I said, whatever it was, I told her, I don't remember right. And she said, to one woman. I mean, she said it almost like I did.

To one woman. Brethren, I learned two lessons. I learned the horribleness of the doctrine of unconditional eternal security.

And I learned the blessing of Christ Jesus in the home. And I won't preach anything else but that. My wife told me this morning.

She was here, by the way, last evening. And my wife told me this morning, just before I left, she said, Oh, Dad, God has been so good. And I don't deserve it.

Well, alright. There are things in your home that need to show forth Jesus Christ. Now, the Bible tells us, Wisdom hath builded her house.

Wisdom hath built her house. And she hath hewn out her seven pillars. Now, we can go and try to figure seven pillars together.

And I've done that already. I've preached wedding messages on the seven pillars of wisdom in the home. But brethren, your pillars may be different ones than mine.

There are some things, you know, I have a message I've preached a few different times, found back in chapter 8 of Romans, that I call the four pillars for the Christian. And I love that message. I love to preach it.

It's so encouraging. And I like to preach about pillars in the Christian home. But that's not really my message this morning.

So we're going to take a walk through a house. You know, David said, when he was pursued by Saul's army, he said, Oh, he said, Oh, and I don't understand all that. I'm not quite sure.

You know, I've said already that some fathers, and it almost makes me, I realize my wife is a better cook than my mother ever was. No, I don't want to say ever. Yes, I guess so.

My wife is a good cook. Very good cook. You can see it.

But I have been very puzzled at some of these fathers who, after living 20, 30 years with a wife, have been able to say to their wife, Well, yeah, that pumpkin pie is good, but don't taste like my mother. I tell you, my mothers, I'll tell you something, you don't remember a taste of a pumpkin pie for 30 years. I don't believe you do.

And furthermore, you are defaulting your wife. And I hear this. But I want to say about David, and I didn't intend to use this for David, but David was there and he said, Oh, for a drink of the well, of the water of the well in Bethlehem.

And I would like if each of us here today has that longing for our home tomorrow evening. That they are willing to brave the battles of life to go back to that well in Bethlehem. Not all of you can have your wife coming like mine did this week.

All right. Ready to go? Let's take a look at this blueprint. Now, the first thing that I have down here, and I don't know if you can see the numbers.

Maybe you can't. I'll try to explain it. But I just wanted to do something to give you an idea.

And please, again I'm going to tell you, you might never design your home like I did. I just want you to have a Christ-centered, good, beautiful, wonderful Christian home. It's possible.

Oh, I want to encourage you. It's possible. I have worked with people in homes, in their home life, in their marriage life, and in the things that are going on in their home.

And there's nothing worse, like Denny was saying this morning, than just to quit. It's a terrible thing if you just quit. So don't quit.

You say, but Abner, you don't understand. I know I don't. But God does.

I don't understand. I don't even profess to understand. The foundation.

Mena Simons. Mennonites loved that verse that Mena Simons claimed as one of his favorite verses. But they still don't know how to build a foundation too many times.

And I said Mennonites. I say that for all of us. But I'm going to tell you that I, even though my wife and I, and here I go, my wife and I did not build on this foundation.

Somehow. Well, I'm going to say this. The foundation.

What on what is your home built? Is it built on love? And you know that we're sort of cheated in the English language. Because Greek actually has four terms for love. And we in the English have one.

And I'm not going to go into that. That's not my cry today. But we can say our home is built on love.

My wife and I fell in love. I want to correct something I said yesterday. I told you about this thing of dim lights and candle lights and it's romantic.

And maybe I thought when I left, or last night when I was home, or when I was at my daughter's place, I thought maybe I left the impression to you brethren, that this isn't romantic. I guess it's maybe not quite my idea that that's going to bring, shoot some kind of strange feelings through me to be in a dark place. Maybe I gave that impression.

There are things that my wife loves. And one of them is candle light. And so I have learned I need to be romantic.

Pretty hard for a loud mouth like me, you know, to feel romantic. No, it's not hard. The idea is that we have different ideas, you know.

And I just wanted to correct that. If you and your wife can just get closer by sitting under candle light, God bless you, I'll bring the candles. Because I think it can be a beautiful thing.

That's not really what I meant to say. My biggest problem was the light situation. And so, let's think about this.

What is your home built on? You know, the world today is getting married on the foundation of love. And now, as somebody was telling me not long ago, they have computer programs that Tim LaHaye might like, I don't know, where it measures your temperaments. And if you're like melancholy with so much of this, and there's four of them, I made a study on it and I forget it.

And you have this and that and those and that and that and that, and that's it. Let me tell you something. That can also cause a big accident.

Because it's still selfish. And so the foundation of the home is Jesus Christ. And I praise God that my Heavenly Father took my wife and I, and we've often talked about it.

I'll just say this. My wife and I did not have fights before we were converted. I loved my wife.

I'm ashamed. I bow my head in shame. You know what I told my wife? I was an obsessed hunter.

Yesterday I told you I smoked cigarettes. I smoke two packs of cigarettes a day. And I told my wife, after I had asked her if she would marry me, I said no.

And she had said, let's try it. No, she didn't say it that way, but she agreed. Then I told her, I said, Anna, I had two sins in my youth that were horrible, three, four, five, but two that were a real hard one to give up.

And they were my cigarettes and gambling. I was a diseased gambler. And before we got married, I decided I had come back into the church, and this has to stop.

But I told my wife, I said, Anna, I smoke, and I go hunting. And this is not just deer hunting. This is not just rifle hunting.

This was the whole scenario. And my brother had married before I did. And I said, I don't want a wife like his, because she constantly controlled him here and there, and so I thought I'm going to lay the foundation.

Do you know something, brethren? When I came to the Lord Jesus Christ, those two things, after confessing my horrible sin and sin life, my sins and the sinner that I was, those two things the Lord brought right to my door. Nobody came and talked to me about it. The Lord brought it to my door.

He had ways of doing it. I shouldn't say nobody talked to me. I was in church one night and the preacher, Uri Shetler, many of you wouldn't know him.

That man was a spark in my young Christian life years ago, in the 60's. And that man was preaching a message, and he said in his message that he was hunting up on the mountain and he loved the Lord. And he said all at once it was almost like an audible voice, and the voice was from God.

And it said, Uri, I called you to hunt souls, not deer. And my wife told me later, she didn't tell me that night, praise God, but she sat there and she told me later, she said, oh Abner, do you hear that? But I went home and I got my gun cabinet, my pistols, my bow, my arrows, my shotguns, my rifles, and we didn't have eBay, but I had an eBay sale. I sold everything.

Now please, brethren, if you love to go out there and hunt, I'm telling you, if you're obsessed with it, you better deal with it. But the foundation, I have to get off of this one, but you need the solidness of the love of Jesus Christ in your home. You need that.

I don't care, brethren and sisters, you can work a lot of other things out. When that's there, you can work it out. Alright, the second one is the porch.

You know, we're walking into this house, and please, you understand what I'm doing. I'm not telling you how to build a house. I'm telling you how I have seen things in having a home.

A home, not a house, a home. And so you come on the porch. Well, you know, the porch is the place where you welcome your people or your guests.

This is a part of the godly home. It's hospitality. I believe we can do no greater favor to our home, brethren, than to teach yourself, first of all, help your wife find a balance in this, and if you have children, to let your children know what is godly hospitality.

It is a need. I tell you, I travel here and there, we have people at home, they never go any place. And it's hard for them to know the blessings of hospitality in the home.

There's five places, if I'm not mistaken, where the Lord directs us, and I'm going to say commands us, to be given to hospitality. I've related this story, and I'm going to repeat it to this group of men, to my own shame. I was in a church in Wisconsin, Sheldon, Wisconsin, probably 11, 12... No, it's... Yes, it is.

It's more than that. It's 15 years ago. And I preached a message on hospitality.

One message. You know, you didn't think I could spend an hour preaching on hospitality. I did.

I went home. We were remodeling our old house. I was down in the basement.

I was working down there. I was busy. My daughter, who goes to church here, wanted to get married.

And I wanted this finished. And I'm an impatient man. And I was down here working, and Anna opened the staircase and said, Abner, there's someone up here that wants to see you.

We talk Pennsylvania Dutch, Anna and I. And I was down in the basement, and I thought, Oh, these guys want to sell me something, and I don't want to buy anything. And my impatience came up, and I said, In Pennsylvania Dutch, Anna... I almost said it in Dutch, I don't have time. Who is it? Then she said, It's somebody that was a preacher in the church in Wisconsin where you were.

Oh, okay. I goes upstairs, and I come out the door, Brother, it's so good you came to see us. Well, he didn't understand Pennsylvania Dutch.

You know what he said? Wie bescht, Abner. I never will forget that. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.

I have two, if you notice on here, a front porch and a back porch. Sometimes we can easily show hospitality on the front porch. But what if that dirty looking bum comes around, and he comes at the back door? What if the neighbor over here, whom you see his life, and you're not interested in it, we should be, but we aren't.

He comes to the back door. The same thing stands. What is our hospitality? May I say this, brethren? In my life as a minister, and my life at home, I am convinced that hospitality in the church of God, and in the homes of godly people, is going to mean more to your neighbors than all your... I'm not throwing that away, but in all your preaching and all that kind of thing.

Because it is not natural for the natural man... You know, the Bible says, I like the German, by the way. And what it means is the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit. But he will understand hospitality.

It will open up his heart. Oh, when I hear the testimony this dear brother gave, I think of that. Now, here was a boy and a girl.

Well, I better not get sidetracked. But they came from a home and they were seeking love. And that's what a lot of people are looking for.

Can we show it? Number three. Oh, I want to say one more thing. I wrote some things down so I don't forget them.

I was at a place one time... I'm giving you some don't-do-its. I was at a place in Indiana one time, and I was told to go to this certain house for the noon meal. I was having me.

I came to this house and there was nobody around. And so I went up and I knocked on the door and all of a sudden I heard a lot of screams scurrying around inside. And I heard the mother in the house say, Girls, the preacher is here.

I mean in that type of tone. I didn't know. You know, I have a tendency to sit in the house and I don't like to lock the house.

My wife, where we live, it's not the best. Maybe just not to keep everything unlocked. But I like to sit in the house and I'm one of those, if I'm sitting down and somebody knocks at the door, I say, Come on in.

My wife says, That's not real hospitality. And I think she's right. Get up and go over to the door and open the door and say, Come on in.

But I thought that's hospitality. You know, just let your hair down. Come on in.

Hospitality. Number three. The living room.

This is the place in the Christian home where, as I just said, you let your hair down. Brethren, I'm going to tell you something. If your Christian home, and let me use this term, in the living room is a tense place where there is friction, where you can almost feel attitudes.

If you have children, I warrant to say that those children are going to become very insecure or very rebellious. You say, Why? I'm sorry to tell you this. But that was my parents' home.

My father, in his early years, my younger brothers, Melvin and some of those, the home was a little different. But my father was a workaholic. And my father was a go-getter.

And he was a very staunch law person. And our home was often, when I was 16, 17 years old, I had two older siblings, and our home was often a tension. Now, if you'll notice that I have on this picture, and I did that intentionally, I have this place where it's a place to relax.

In my simple drawings, I drew a recliner. And notice that the chairs are turned towards each other. Because there needs to be communication in the home.

Your children need to feel free to come to Daddy and tell Him... And I failed in this terribly in my early years. I was sitting with my daughter back here and my wife and my two daughters. And just as the moment of such a blessing came over, and I said to my daughter, Ida, I love you.

Now you say, what in the world were you doing? Listen, I regret my young years, even as a Christian, in letting the things of this world make my children feel that Dad's just not really with us. And I know I did. And now here I am.

And I've gone through sorrow and pain with my daughters. And I love them. And I'm going to tell them so.

I had a preacher of a conservative... Anyway, if I say conservative, you know already where I'm coming from. But of a church. And he said that religion, or our faith, does not have anything to do with emotion.

Now he knew me. In fact, he was the man that led me to the Lord. And years later he told me this.

He said, actually emotions do not have a place in the Christian life. And I told him, I don't agree. And I don't.

And some of those men... And brethren, please, I want to be understood here. I'm not advocating something. If you've got a problem... But my girls, all six of them, one of the first things they want when they come home is a hug from daddy.

And I'm not going to deprive them from it because I love it too much myself. And there's nothing unclean about it. I just said that.

You know, the living room. To share in. To have a share with each other.

That's what I'd like to have here. Just a sharing. You know the Greek word konio.

I didn't say that right. Kononio. That means fellowship.

Well, there's another Greek word, sonkononia, which means to share together with each other. And what more did God tell us? Through the Word of God, we have fellowship one with another. And your children will never forget that fellowship.

And now I'm going to tell you, with all these men sitting here, I'm trying to tell you if you will hear me, I do not believe that I attained the pinnacle. I do not believe that what I did all worked out and what I was working at was always right. Please, don't use me as a phototype.

You look to Jesus and ask Him to show you what true fellowship is. I get a little weary of this thing where people want to, you know, well, how did you do it? Did you spank Him four times? I probably spanked my children less than most of you fathers did. Probably did.

But I'll tell you one thing. My children will all testify to this. When Daddy spanked, we knew we were spanked.

I'd a lot rather spank my child one time so she doesn't forget it for quite a while than to constantly give her little pats and make her irritated. And I see this. Brethren, forgive me.

No, don't forgive me. Hear me. I see this in young families.

It's not going to work. I said I was going to talk of child training. If you have a child that after you try to straighten this child up and it just goes... It's time to take her to the woodshed again.

There's rebellion in there. I learned that. I'll tell you the first time my son... Before we were Christians, the Lord gave my wife and I... Mike, no, he's up at the preacher's meeting.

Okay. And Mike, he was this little child and he was screaming and crying one night when I came home and I didn't know what to do. So I thought, I'm going to spank him.

The next thing I knew, my wife was crying. And I said, what do I do? Well, praise God. There was people from Ohio after I got converted and we and a little group right here in Lancaster County, they came and they taught us some Bible principles.

My wife and I had a motto. Don't go out looking for a motto this afternoon. We had this motto that we hung on our wall.

My children that were living then all remember this one. Here on the motto, there was a doghouse. And here there was five hooks.

I'm not going to draw a dog, but in every one of those hooks, just to show you a little bit what I mean, there was a dog hanging. The first dog was Daddy. The second one was Mama.

The next one was, turn the mic off, Michael, Sarah Ann and Kathy. And here in the doghouse, there was a hook. My children hated that thing with a passion.

You know why? Because if Anna got into a situation that she knew was going to take a heavier hand, she would go, oh, her and I never got in there, but she would go and take that dog and hang it in the doghouse. I was telling some brethren this. I guess it was in a prayer group.

I come home from work. I work day labor. And I come in the door.

There's a dog in the doghouse. I hated to discipline my children. It was not an easy chore for me.

But there hung the dog. And nobody takes that dog out except Daddy. Now, you may think, well, that's the answer.

It may be. It may not be. God can give you some wisdom in that.

But don't let your living room be a tension spot. If you know a child needs it, if you know your wife needs... I almost said a talking to. When you and your wife need to get something straightened out, just get it done.

Don't let that become a tension. I have already. I mean, we say about taking anger to bed.

And I have learned some lessons. But I have also had that tension hanging there. And it spoils your home.

Let's go quickly to the next one. The fourth one is the kitchen. I'm going to use this.

And here, you notice, I'm not talking the wife's part here. I'm talking the husband. When I preached this message, I did preach it.

I think I preached it in Vienna. I'm not sure. But I think I preached something like this in Vienna.

I like to say that when I preach to a mixed crowd, I like to find each place here. But I'm going to focus on us men. Now, here in the kitchen, as we know in a house, that's the place where we get our food.

That's where we eat. Do you know, brethren, there is no one as much, I'm going to use that word rather than say you're the only one, but that is as much responsible for what your family is feeding on than the Father. And I'm going to be very frank.

I have a tremendous concern, brethren and sisters, when we were in the Mennonite circles, a lot of this media, no, that's not the media. That's not what I wanted. Electronic things were not around.

But if they would have been, we would have been told no. Now we're in the place where we sort of let it to the daddies. And I love that because that was one of my greatest things when the church where I had been, where the daddies were leaning on the church.

That's not right. I'm going to say like Dr. Rice, you're a stricker and a parasite in the community. You take your place.

But listen, in the kitchen, your reading materials, what your children are entertained by, the things that they're playing, physical, materially and spiritually, you and I are responsible. I told somebody just this morning. My wife and I spent nine weeks in Honduras the other summer.

And while we were down there, we met and got to be good friends with a couple. She was Honduranian. He was from up here.

And they lived in a big, they call it a finca or a ranch. And we got to be good friends. And we started to, my wife and I had a glorious opportunity to, though we couldn't talk Spanish, they could talk English.

And maybe that sort of drew us to them. I only had enough words to get me in awful trouble. And so we would go to their place or they would come down to the mission.

And one day, they did not really fit in with Honduran society. And so they had a daughter and a son. And they were teaching them on the computers.

That's how they were teaching their curriculum, was the programs on the computer. And then one day, when we went up to their house, and Janelle, which was the wife there, she said to me, she said, Abner, I found out, or we had told them, I guess, that we were from Amish background. And she said, you know, they have always fascinated me.

They have always fascinated me. Even a radical Amishman like Denny, I guess. Anyway, she said, we have a tape here, a video, that I would like you to watch.

And I would like you to tell me what's Amish about this. And I said, I'm not into that. I'm just not into that.

She said, what do you mean? Well, I said, my wife and I, and our children, have tried. When my children leave home and are married, it's that son-in-law's position that he has to take. I'm not going to interfere.

That's one thing my wife and I do not do. We do not interfere with their homes. That's before God.

Now, I may say some things of warning, like I'm talking to you. But, I told them, I'm not really interested. And she and he just begged us.

I said, so, okay, what is it? Is it clean? Well, in their eyes, it was clean. And she came out with this VCR that was called, The Witness. If I ever saw a joke, it was that one.

I mean, I was born, raised Amish until I was 30 years old. I can tell you an Amish man that comes, I may not be able to say whether he's from Ohio or Michigan, but I can tell you he's not from Lancaster. And you may say, how do you know it? I could just see it.

And so they showed me, they started playing this thing. And my wife and I, not being used to this type of thing, oh, I used to go to the movies and all kinds of horrible things as a boy. But for years I haven't.

And I sat there, and we sat there side by side, and I said, well, Anna, let's just look at it in an objective way to try to help them. And I kept telling her, that's not Amish. Those are not Amish people.

And then they had these people singing in a church. Yeah, now that sounds like it was state. But those people are not Amish.

And we went on and on and on. Now I'm telling this, brethren. I'm warning us.

Please, you listen to me, you young fathers. That stuff, these DVDs and these videos, they're dangerous. We sat there and we watched it.

And she was getting to the point where she said, oh, you mean that's not Amish? No, it's not Amish. And all at once, a naked woman appeared on the screen. An Amish woman, if you please.

No, it wasn't Amish. And I tell you, it just brought me to a place like this. That's how the devil gets a hold of our families.

You're responsible in the kitchen, my dear brethren, whether you want to be or not, and what your family is feasting on. And I'm going to say that for games. If you allow your sons to get so taken up in sport, competitive, just... I tell you, I was terribly that way.

Somebody talked about playing cards. I don't allow cards. You know why? Because I was a completely addicted gambler.

I'd go into the city of Lancaster here and play poker all night long. You say, but we're talking Old Maid. Okay, okay.

But there's something about ruffling the cards, slapping them out, that just... Now you say, okay, you've got an overdose. All right, I'll go with that. But brethren, find out what your children are eating and make yourself responsible.

Let's go to the next one. The dining room. I'm not going to get through them.

But this is where we eat. Now I'm going to use this one in more of a physical way. I'm going to tell you this, brethren.

I believe one great damage that has been done to the family of the Christian home is this fast food, eat while you run, no time to get the family together, there's no family time. You know how they turn on the television about prime time. That is your prime time.

Get your feet under the table. Sit down in a chair. And here is where you're going to make a difference whether your children are well-behaved, courteous children or brats.

I am convinced of it. You have no idea. I'm sure you do.

Please, forgive that statement. We have no idea. I'll say it that way.

How children pick up. I remember one time, Michael was still at home. We were at home and I did not allow my children when we sat around the table to reach in and get something until we had prayer.

And you say, well, you know, come on, listen, you're going to have to have order or you'll have disorder. And I remember one Saturday night and we had a habit when we were farming at Daring, on Saturday night was pizza night. My wife would make a delicious pizza and we'd have chips and pizza and we were too poor to buy pop, but somehow we managed, you know, and we'd have this lemonade maybe and we always enjoyed it, sitting around there just having a nice time together.

And I remember one evening I came in or we were in there and my wife was getting the things together and I got this bowl of chips and set it in the middle of the table and the children were starting to sit down and so I just got a chip and the children's hands went in for the chips. There went my teaching. You see, we do this, brethren.

And yet, and I'm using this more in a real way of life because I see sometimes in church, I see sometimes in gatherings, children just... And I know I've got a grandson. I tell you what I hope he never experiences to get 68 years old. He has springs in his legs, springs in his butt, springs wherever.

He just can't sit quiet. But I'm going to tell you something. I have learned that if you teach your children to have that time of worship in the morning and they sit quiet at worship, it's going to make a big difference in church.

And you don't have to take Cheerios on a string. I'm going to tell you a funny one. Somebody said to me, I have a humorous... And I do.

I constantly need to curb it. But when I was a boy in Juniata County, my parents moved from Lancaster to Juniata County. And those Amish churches were different.

This was Amish. I was a boy of about 14 years old. The first time we were in church service, they had this practice of passing around a bowl of half-moon pies in the church.

I thought, Oh, this is one great church! And I didn't realize that those half-moon pies were for the... And the bowl comes out, and I love half-moon pies made in Kitchick or Willis Valley. And when the bowl came, and somebody was looking at me, I put it back in and I passed it on. It wasn't for me.

Now, here's what I want to tell you. You can, as fathers and mothers, you can take things like that along to church. You can take Cheerios on a string.

You can take magnet dogs. And I'm not going to fault you. But I found out that all it did was make my children more fidgety.

I found out that my children, slain from breakfast to the noon meal, can easily be judged. And I don't think I was cruel. I think some of these things are cruel.

I'm not talking of a pacifier. I'm not talking of a little... something for them to handle and jingle. That's not what I'm talking about.

When those children get to be four or five years old, we need to teach them. And you'll start a lot of that at the dinner table. You'll start a lot of that.

The Christian family does not exist for its own benefit. The Christian family is to bring glory to God. But the blessing to man is a by-product of the Christian family.

And it is a blessing. What a blessing for your wife or you to go down with the shopping cart through the aisles of Walmart or Supercenter or whatever. And the children sit there with their hands like that.

We have a grocery store at home. I could tell you stories for the next hour. It's pathetic.

Do it at the dinner table. Child reaches out for something. Son, you can't have that.

I'm talking from the perspective of a father, not a grandfather. I was down in Honduras when my son and his wife were down or my son-in-law and his wife were down there and my dear grandsons. And one of them was acting up.

And my son-in-law took him into the bathroom. And I was sitting outside. Daddy, yes, daddy.

Yes, daddy. Whack, whack, whack. When he came out, the grandson was crying and the grandpa was crying.

We're weak. I bawled. But I knew it has to be done.

Let's go to the next one. Number six, the study. The Bible tells us study to show thyself.

You know, study is not just to get a lot of knowledge. Study is to show thyself approved of God. That's what study is about.

And I don't mean that in your home you have to have a study. But brethren, I would like to tell you this. In your home, go do what you need to do to learn things about your home.

Don't just pass it off and say, ah, it doesn't matter much. Oh, if I could tell you, and I'm sure many of you have seen this already, what a benefit it can be. I'm sure you have.

You know, I often think of the study. I have told people already when I came for meetings and they asked me, what do I want? And I tell them, well, I'm not going to really tell you except if you want to turn to 2 Kings 4, verse 10, I don't have to tell you anymore. That's what I need.

I'm going to let you turn there if you want to. It's up to you. But I said this.

That's what I need. And I'm going to say this. That's what you need in the study.

This study tells us in 2 Kings 4, verse 10. You need a table to lay your Bible on. You need a chair to sit on.

And yes, in the night you need a candlestick. But you spend time there, Father. And your home will change.

You need maybe a carpet. And it ought to have a spot where your knees are very familiar. I have a stop sign in my study.

A literal stop sign. It's about this big. It's been a big help to me.

I went out to Indiana. By the way, you Allen County people, that's where I went. I went to Allen County years ago.

I say years ago. Probably 12 years ago. And I was going for meetings.

I was a little late. I got into a little town. I don't know.

Was it Grebel? Or is there something like that? There's Jonathan. I'm not sure. There was this little town.

And they had given me direction. I got a little tangle up. And I came up this alley.

And I went right through. And I didn't see the stop sign. And I went right out on the street.

And a pickup truck that had been out of the showroom about an hour and a half nailed me right in my sight. I called the church people and they came out and got me. Everything got straightened out.

But that Saturday, that was a week of meetings. And that Sunday night, some brethren in the church came. They never knew what that would do for me.

But some brethren in the church came to me. And they had this stop sign this high. Beautiful stop sign.

It was just like a stop sign. They said, Hey Abner, we want to give you something. Take it on home.

I took that stop sign home and I put it in my study. They had Bible verses on the back. That stop sign has been a blessing.

Because I tend to run off unchecked. And I like to use that as far as the study is concerned. Go in there and stop a while.

All the turmoil of this... Well, I'm going to have to close. I don't want to run this over time. But I quickly want to go yet to the bathroom.

Maybe you don't want to talk about the bathroom. But listen, the bathroom in the Christian home is the place to get washed up. Under the blood of Jesus Christ.

It's the place to get washed from the aggravation of the day. It's the place of confession. And you put it in the commode, I'm speaking plainly, and you flush it down through.

You don't carry bitterness against your wife. You don't carry attitudes against your children. You need a trip to the bathroom.

That's where the garbage of the world goes... I mean, of the home goes out. And you and I have the privilege in Christ Jesus to visit that bathroom and keep our home smelling real good. Brother told me of a man who was sleeping.

And some of his friends, to tease him, put a little piece of Lindberger cheese under his nose. And he got away. Why? Something smells in here.

And then he went out of the bedroom, and into the living room. Still smells. And then he walked out outside to get fresh air.

He said, the whole world stinks. And brethren, there's a lot of people who feel the whole world is stinking because they don't visit the bathroom. Please, I don't want to make you laugh.

But these things are serious. And I say, I just have to spend some time in the bathroom. Do you know what it is to go to your wife and say, Anna, I'm so sick.

That's what I'm talking about. Anna, I had no right to do this. My attitude wasn't right.

I did something to my wife not long ago. I regret it. I wounded her deeply.

And it was because of my humorous attitude. I thought it was sort of funny, and so I said it. But she took it personally.

And you know, that happens. I have often said, these light remarks that we make to each other are not always light remarks. Let's learn to take them in.

Well, I'm just going to close. I don't want to run over time. It's time for me to close.

I have some more numbers here. And I'm just going to let them up to you. When you think about the garage, and you think about the playroom, and you think about the sewing room.

I just don't have enough of time. No, I've been too slow. Let's say it that way.

I had enough of time. But I'd just like you to realize that this that I'm talking about here, please, I'm sure you heard me say it, but don't try to follow a prototype. Go to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Go to God. And ask Him to open up your home to show Him your rooms as you walk through. And I tell you what, it's one beautiful place to dwell.

May God bless you. I think we'll just stand and have prayer yet before I turn the time over. Our gracious Father, I thank You.

God, I thank You for Jesus. He's the one, O Lord, that made it all possible. Lord, I know that when He went on the cross, He had an idea of what the dying, the resurrection, the sitting at the right hand of God and being an intercessor for us is going to do in the Christian home.

Tonight, I praise You, O Lord, for this marvelous heritage. O Father, don't let us throw it away lightly. Be with us as we go from here.

In Christ's name, amen. Thank you for your patience with me.

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