

2. Bible Pictures of a Godly Home

by Denny Kenaston

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a vision for a godly home and the process of nurturing and caring for children to achieve that vision.

Scripture: Psalm 112:1, Psalm 128:1, Psalm 144:1, Isaiah 58:9, 1 Corinthians 16:14

Topics: "Family Discipleship", "Godly Parenting"

Description

Denny Kenaston preaches about the importance of having a vision for raising godly children, emphasizing the need for a vision written upon the heart by God's finger. He highlights the significance of not just knowing what to do in raising children, but having a spiritual vision where the Spirit of God writes His will upon the tables of our hearts. Through a detailed study of Psalms 144, he explores the Old Testament context of war and the desire for a peaceful society, illustrating the need for fathers to come home from battle to guide their families and take care of their homes. The sermon delves into various Old Testament pictures of a godly home, such as nurtured plants, polished stones, and olive plants, emphasizing the importance of nurturing, training, and disciplining children from a young age. Denny Kenaston challenges the congregation to pay the price, make sacrifices, and change priorities to raise children who will be a mighty influence in the world.

Transcript

The 2nd of 11 messages on The Godly Home

We want to give a greeting to each one, in the name of the Lord Jesus tonight. It was a blessing to be in the worship service and sing and praise God together. I appreciated the words on vision. I plan to continue in that direction this evening. And I'll give you my reason why. I can stand up here for a whole week, and tell you all the things that you ought to do about how to raise your children and some of you already know probably more than I do. How to raise your children, and how to have a godly home. But if you don't have a vision in your heart when we're done; I mean a vision that's been written upon your heart by God's finger, then it will all pass away in a couple of weeks and you'll be looking for another place in Holmes County where they're going to have meetings on the home. So, my desire this morning, and my same desire this evening is that God would give you a vision! A vision! Not a vision like some people have when they have dreams and things like that, I'm talking about a spiritual vision where the Spirit of God takes the Word of God, and writes upon the tables of our heart. The fleshly tables of our heart, His Will. And what He can do for us. That vision. And that's what I'd like this evening.

I'd like you to open your bibles to Psalm 144, as we begin. And if I were to give a title to the message this evening, I would call it Bible Pictures of a Godly Home. We'll start in Psalm 144, and I'd like for you to notice two things as we read Psalm 144. Number 1, the context is war in Psalm 144. You keep that in mind while we read. I'll read it aloud, you read along. The context is war, and the object is a peaceful society. David wrote Psalm 144. The context is war, and the object is a peaceful society. You need to know those two things in order to understand this Psalm. The context is war, and the object is a peaceful society. Now let's read:

"Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.

My goodness and my fortress, my high tower, and my deliverer, my shield; and He in whom I trust. Who subdueth my people under me.

Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him, or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?

Man is like to vanity. His days are as a shadow that passeth away.

Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down. Touch the mountains and they shall smoke.

Cast forth lightening, and scatter them. Shoot out Thine arrows and destroy them.

Send Thine hand from above. Rid me and deliver me out of the great waters, from the hand of strange children;

Whose mouths speaketh vanity and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God, upon a psaltry, and an instrument of ten strings when I sing praises unto Thee.

It is He that giveth salvation unto us, who delivereth David, his servant, from the hurtful sword.

Rid me and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouths speaketh vanity, and their right hand is the right hand of falsehood:

That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace:

That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets.

That our oxen may be strong to labor; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.

Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

Now I want you to remember that the context here is war. It is very evident to see that, as we read the first couple of verses there, where David is giving praise unto God because He was the one who taught his hands how to fight! And of course, we're looking at the Old Testament context there, of war, and it was truly God's hand and God's power that was upon David and all the men of Israel when they went out to battle. God strengthened their hands. God delivered their enemies into their hands. God gave them the strength and the power and the abilities to go forth and fight the battles for God! God did it and David was

giving praise unto God. So it is easy to see that the context is war, and we can see from verse 12, all the way to 15, that the object is a peaceful society.

In verse 11, David repeats the phrase that he said already once in this chapter, he says it again: "Rid me and deliver me, from the hands of strange children, whose mouths speaketh vanity, and their right hand, is the right hand of falsehood." Now David is speaking about his enemies there. You all know, that David was a man of war. In all the days of David, there was war in Israel. There was fighting in Israel. That means that the men of Israel had to rise up, many times, and go forth to battle. That means the men of Israel had to rise up, go out to the battlefield; and when they went to battle in Israel, they went to battle. They went for six months at a time. They were out in the fields and doing battle. They traveled long distances, and they lived out in the fields, and they were away from their homes, and away from their families, and they were away from their cities and their farms, and whatever their work was that they had to do. They left all of that work and they went forth to battle.

Now, knowing that as a background, we can see that David's desire and his object here for his prayer was a peaceful society. David is crying for deliverance from war. He's crying for deliverance from war. Why? Well, there are seven things in this Psalm that David is crying deliverance from war, for. And you can find them all by the word - "that". You notice that word, "that". It's twice in verse 12, twice in verse 13, three times in verse 14, "that". "Rid me out of the hands of those who speak vanity, "that". So that this will happen, and this will happen, and this will happen, and this will happen."

Now, let's look at those seven things. David is crying for deliverance from war, 1. So that our sons may be as plants, grown up in their youth. Lord! Deliver us from our enemies so that our sons can be like nurtured plants grown up in their youth! 2. Lord deliver us from war, so that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace! 3. Lord, rid us out of the hands of our enemies, that our garners may be full, affording all manner of store. 4. That our sheep may bring forth thousands, and ten thousands. Oh Lord, deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, 5. that our oxen may be strong to labor, 6. That their be no breaking in, nor going out. Oh Lord, deliver us from the hands of our enemies, 7. That there be no complaining in our streets. And then verse 15 - "Happy is that people, that is in such a case."

Now why is this, and how is this, that David can pray, "Lord deliver us from the hands of our enemies" so that all these things will take place? Maybe it's already dawned on your mind. If it hasn't, let me tell you why. When there's wartime in Israel, the men leave their homes. They leave their children. They leave their wives. They leave their farms. They leave their business. They leave their cities, and they go out to war. What happens to the wives, the children, the farms, the oxen, the cattle, and all those things while the men are out to war? Well, what happens to yours, when you are gone too much? They suffer. That's a good word. They suffer.

So, here's David, king of Israel - Godly David, with a vision, of what God has put in his heart by this Book. And he knows what Israel is supposed to be. And he knows what the children are supposed to be like. He knows what kind of a blessing God wants to put on the nation of Israel, but here is Israel, going out to battle again. Off to battle again. What happens to the children while the fathers are away? What happens to your children when you're away too much? So David cried, "O Lord, rid me, rid me and deliver me from the hands of strange children, whose mouths speaketh vanity, and their right hand is the right hand of falsehood." "Lord deliver Israel from war, so that the men of war can go back home and guide their families, and take care of their farm, so their garners will be full again; so that the sheep may bring forth thousands; so that there will be oxen working out in the fields; so that there will be happiness out in the

streets, so there will be no more complaining in Israel; O Lord, end the wars in Israel, so that all the men of God, the men of war can come back home and take their place in their homes!" That was the cry that David cried there.

Now the Lord didn't answer his prayer in his own life, but the Lord did answer his prayer. His son Solomon had very little war during his reign. Very little war. You think about that. Twenty, thirty years - no war. Twenty, thirty years, fathers there everyday, guiding the children: teaching them, training them, watching over the sheep, over the farm, in the streets taking care of things. All the leaders of all the homes; all the leaders in the nation of Israel are home! What happened to Israel in Solomon's day? Israel became the most powerful nation on the face of the earth in Solomon's reign. Did you ever think about that? And it wasn't because Israel was a mighty nation of war - not in Solomon's reign! No way! In David's reign, the enemies - the nations of the world did tremble that lived near Israel - around. Yes they did! Israel was a mighty force of war and power. But in Solomon's reign, Israel became a testimony to the whole world of a nation that is so different than all the other nations. The nations looked on to Israel and said, "They're healthier than we are, they're wealthier than we are, they're wiser than we are, they're more prosperous than we are, they have more power than we have, they're happier than we are, they're more stable than we are! And all nations of the world looked on Israel and said, "There's something special about that nation!" And I'm here to say tonight, that the reason why that nation became such a mighty nation, in Solomon's reign, is because the men of war came home! The men of war came home! Those men of God that stood out there and fought in the power of the Holy Spirit and swung their swords and fought against the enemy - all this spiritual energy that they were directing toward the battle, came home and put it in their families! And Israel became a mighty nation by the teaching and the preaching of the fathers in every one of the homes!

And that's the only way that any nation will become a mighty nation! When the fathers of the nation; the men of God of the nation, rise up and get a burden, and get a vision, of what they can do in their own homes! If we could just get a vision of what God can do through each one of us as men in our own homes - oh, listen! God could shake this country for Himself! Yes He could!

We talk about revival; and praise God for revival! Praise God, that God brings revival! But listen if all we see when we think about revival is the revival of preaching and souls coming down the aisle and all that, we'll only see half of a revival! Here's the other half of revival! Listen - if your revival doesn't touch your home and make you a man of God and bring up some godly children - You didn't have a revival! You didn't have one!

Praise the Lord.

So David, had his prayer answered in the days of Solomon, when the men of God came home. When the men of God came home. Polished stones; nurtured plants -

I'd like for us this evening, to look at some of these pictures, of a godly home. They're very interesting. And don't forget, while we're looking at these, you'll find them all in the Old Testament. Those godly men, those men of war, that came home from the battle, these were the pictures that they lived off of. (Tapping finger on the Word of God) The ones we're going to look at, they're the pictures that they lived off of! These are their scriptures, this is what they fed off of, this is what they heard, preached at the temple and in the synagogues. These pictures that we're going to look at - Old Testament pictures.

"That our sons may be as plants, grown up in their youth..." Let's just look at that one for a minute. Let's look inside that little picture there. Not look out on the edge of it, but let's look down inside of it. How do you get plants grown up in their youth? I studied that word. I studied that little phrase there, "plants grown up in their youth". Do you know what it's talking about? It's talking about a plant that has been, the seed's been planted, the ground has been cultivated, the shoot came up out of the ground, it's been watched over, it's been watered, the weeds have been pulled out around it, it's been fertilized, it's been fussed over, it's been nurtured; the plant has grown up and it's just to the place of bearing fruit. There's nothing more beautiful to a farmer than a plant that's just ready to bear fruit. You know, once the fruit starts producing, then the plant starts losing some of its beauty, but just at that point, right before it's ready to start bearing fruit, that plant is in its strength! That plant is beautiful! That plant has plenty of green in it. The leaves are strong, the leaves are beautiful, and everything is ready. The stage has been set for the plant to bear fruit. And that's the picture right here! Plants grown up in their youth. Plants that are still in their youth but ready to bear fruit. And that's the picture that Israel had to live off of. When the father's thought about guiding their homes and raising their children, they thought that very picture!

Now there's a process of nurturing there. We all know that. We all know enough about gardens to know that there's a process of nurturing there. There's tools. There's a vision, and there's work. Every farmer knows when you plant the seed, you already see the thing growing with fruit on it, Amen? Isn't that right? Every farmer knows that! We don't plant the seeds without having a vision of the plants standing tall, with the fruit already on them! That's the way we do it! If we didn't have a vision, we wouldn't go to planting. Oh may God give us a vision tonight of a plant that's standing tall, ready to bear fruit! And then may He give us the grit, the Holy grit! The intestinal discipline that it takes to carry out all the nurturing and all the planting and all the cultivating and all the weeding and all the fertilizing and all the hours of time that it takes to put into that plant to get it to the place where it's ready to bear fruit! May God give us a vision of that.

Polished stones...you think about that one for a minute. "That our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace." A cornerstone is a very important stone in a building. It's a very important stone. It's the stones that go along the edge of a building. They're special. They're usually hand carved. They're usually chiseled out special to put some ornamentation to the palace. Now the palace has to have a flat wall this way and a flat wall this way or it won't stand. So they use the corners to make ornamentation, which makes the palace look beautiful. And here God uses that very illustration that Israel lived off of that illustration. "How are our daughters going to be?" Like cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace. You ever stop and think about that? Think about that one now. Here it is again. There's vision in mind, when that man, that special carver, who makes those cornerstones, when he takes that solid stone, that's a square.... does not he have a vision in his mind of what that thing is going to look like when he gets done? Surely he does. He sees that cornerstone already shaped out, exactly the way he wants it, he sees that cornerstone, already sitting in that building. He sees that cornerstone, beautifying that building and making it look like a palace. He sees all of that! But oh, there's a lot of work to be done before that cornerstone fits into that building. There's a lot of work to be done. The man who does the carving - he has tools. Sure he does, he's got a hammer, and he's got a chisel and he's got some scraping instruments and when he goes to work on that stone, he's going to make some noise, and there's going to be some pain involved, as the parts of that stone are chipped away by the hammer and the chisel.... You get the picture? There's a vision in there, a vision of a finished product. There's work to be done and there's tools to do it with. And here again, we find Israel's pictures. How are you going to take care of your children Israel? Your going to raise up your daughters like polished stones, cornerstones that are polished

after the similitude of a palace.

You know, I hear this a lot when I speak to people personally about the home and raising children and all of that. I hear these words a lot: "I don't see how I can do it. I don't see how I can be what I need to be. Pray for me, I don't think I'll be able to do it." Listen. Did you ever think of this? Speaking about palaces and buildings and all those things, you know, in the Old Testament day, when God wanted to build the Tabernacle, he put the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of wisdom upon the craftsmen so that they were able to build that Tabernacle exactly the way He wanted it. (Exodus 31) And when it was time to build the Temple, in Solomon's day the Spirit of God and of wisdom, lighted again upon those men who were craftsmen, so that they would have the special holy abilities that they needed, in order to make the things in such a way that that Temple would be magnificent and glorify God. And don't you think, that if God was concerned about that earthly tabernacle and God is concerned about the earthly temple in Solomon's day, how much more is God concerned about these little buildings that we have sitting in this room tonight! How much more is God concerned? And how much more will he pour the wisdom, the Spirit of Wisdom and grace and power out upon the hearts of every father and mother in this room, who will, and with all their hearts cry unto God daily, for the grace and the wisdom and the power to raise their children! I tell you tonight, I don't think there's a man or a woman in this room tonight, if they got earnest about raising their children, and they fell on their face everyday, every morning before God and pleaded that God would give them the grace to raise their children for God, I don't think there's anybody in this room that wouldn't learn how to raise your children for God! I don't believe it! I think we don't have, because we ask not! We don't have because we ask not! We don't have because we don't have a vision! We don't have a vision of what God can do through us!

We think, "Well, that's okay for the other guy, but not for me." No.... We're not waiting at the gates of wisdom everyday, that's what the problem is. That's what the problem is. Nurtured plants...Polished stones...

The next one - Psalm 128, in verse 3. Olive plants. Olive plants - it's amazing how the Lord teaches us, isn't it? Nurtured plants, polished stones, olive plants? And all that has to do with children.

Psalm 128:1-3

1."Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord that walketh in His ways.

For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands. Happy shalt thou be and it shall be well with thee.

Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants, round about thy table..."

Every man of Israel knew what that picture was all about. They knew what that picture was all about! If you go to the land of Israel and get to discovering a few things and learn about the customs of the land, you'll find out that any man that has olive plants is considered a wealthy man in Israel. If you've got some olive trees out in your yard, you have something very special. You're considered to be a man of value. You're considered to be a man of wealth! And here again, God in his wisdom, breathed out these words to the men of Israel, and told them, and using the language that they understood, and things around them that they understood - "Oh listen, if you fear me, and you walk in my ways, your wife will be like a fruitful vine, by the sides of the house, and your children, like olive plants, round about thy table..."

Now we need to look at something there, they're not olive trees yet, they're just olive plants, but olive plants grow into olive trees! And olive trees are worth a lot of money! And olive trees bring forth olive oil! And olive trees have value to them, and they are very valuable to the man of the house! You have eight olive trees out in your backyard; you're in pretty good shape in Israel.

All the olive plants have the potential to have rich value in God's kingdom - olive plants. But again, notice how in each one of these pictures, it's visionary. It's visionary. Olive plants that grow into olive trees and become of much value. Visionary! All these pictures are visionary! Because God wants us to have a vision! And from that vision, our life will be worked out the way that He wants it.

A few things about olive oil - in Israel's day, olive oil was used to make the face to shine. In Israel's day, olive oil was used to make the body healthy. In Israel's day, olive oil was used to make the special anointing oil that they poured upon the kings and the priests and the prophets. In Israel's day, olive oil was used for healing. They put olive oil on a sore and they'd wrap it in a bandage so it would heal faster. All these uses for olive oil! Yes, and Israel, "Oh men of Israel, blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that walketh in His ways, your children shall be like olive plants, round about the table." Round about the table. Growing up into olive trees, being fruitful, being a benefit, being a mighty power, being an influence, being a force in the world....that's what God's vision was to Israel!

Psalms 127, just across the page a little here. Building a house... "Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it." Now we're looking at the home. We're looking at the children. We're looking at the household and we see it as a house, and the building of a house, and again, notice these things. You've got to have plans to build a house. When somebody goes to building a house, and I don't know if we have any builders here or not, but most builders know what the house is going to look like when they start. And every part that they put into that building, every board that they lay down, everything has the end product in mind, when we build a house. And here, God is saying, "Except the Lord build the house..." This house, our house, our families... "They labor in vain that build it." It takes a vision, in order to build a house. It takes tools, in order to build a house. It takes methods, in order to build a house.

Scriptures say in Proverbs, "A wise woman buildeth her house, but a foolish woman plucketh it down with her hands." Now we know from scriptures like that it's not talking about putting the boards on the outside of the house, the physical house. It's talking about the home. "A wise woman buildeth her home, but a foolish woman plucketh it down with her hands." Tears it apart. Destroys it. With her very own hands. Except the Lord build our house, except the Lord build our families, our little godly units that God has given us, except the Lord be a builder of those families, we labor in vain that build it. But oh, listen, if the Lord be the builder of the house, then there is no reason for us to have any kind of fear in our heart that we're going to waste our time, that it's not going to work out right, there's no reason why we should have any fear in our heart! If the Lord builds the house, then we don't labor in vain, but we labor with purpose, and we labor with direction, and we labor with vision, and we shall see the house built at the end!

I'm afraid that God's people have swallowed the lies of the devil and they can hardly make a statement like, "My children are going to turn out for God!" They can hardly make a statement like that. Well the Bible is full of illustrations, full of promises to men and women who want to raise their children for God and those promises are to be stood upon, and believed and not to be shirked from. I'm afraid sometimes the devil, first he gets his foot in the door of our heart by making us afraid to make such a confession, and from there it's a downhill road. No way. No way. If the Lord builds the house, we don't labor in vain that build it. But shall we say then, that that's more of the problem. That the Lord didn't build the house. Shall we say

that every now and then, we called on the Lord to build the house, but most of the time we built the house ourselves; and if we did build the house ourselves, then we did labor in vain who built it. But oh, listen.... If the Lord is called upon every single day, and throughout the day to help us to build the house, we don't labor in vain when we build the house. No way! The building of a house...

We spoke this morning about the power of a testimony of a godly home. And what an influence it had in a community in Fort Frances, Ontario, Canada. Some of you missed that testimony. But God wants to raise up families, who are a testimony to the whole community around them. That the whole community looks upon them with favor. That the community knows of them. That they have a testimony of godliness. That they have a testimony of zeal, and love for God. God wants to raise up testimonies like that, all over, all over this country. He wants to raise those up. But, "except the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it."

Down a little further in Psalm 127 again - Arrows in the hand of a mighty man. Verse 3,

3. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord. And the fruit of the womb is His reward.

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. They shall not be ashamed when they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man...Again, we must go back into the Old Testament illustration, to understand what that meant to Israel, to the men of Israel, when those verses were brought home to their heart again and again. Arrows in the hand of a mighty man - in those days, they didn't have factories where arrows got made. If you were a man of war, and you happened to be skilled in the area of the bow and the arrow, you made your own arrows. You made your own arrows. And in those days the men of war, they were prepared for war. I mean, when they shot an arrow, it went where they wanted it to go. They didn't have a problem with missing when they pulled that bow back and shot the arrow out of there. No, they had practiced and practiced and practiced and practiced. So the need for the mighty man was not to hit the mark. He had no problem hitting the mark, but he had to have an arrow that would hit the mark! So the mighty man who was found to be one, who was expert in the bow and the arrow, he made his arrows, and when he made those arrows, he made those arrows with care. Because he knew, if he had a straight arrow, with a sharp point, with the feathers placed just right, when he put it in that bow and pulled back and let go, it would hit the mark. He knew it would! Because he had taken the time to carve that arrow out, and make it nice and straight. And what do you think he was doing while he was carving that arrow? What do you think the vision was in his mind while he carved away on those arrows? Where do you think his mind was? He was out on the battlefield, that's where he was! As he was carving away, in the fire of his home, shaving off a little more here and a little more there, holding up the straight stick, looking at it again, shaving a little more off here - all the while he's working on that arrow, he's out on the battlefield and he's preparing an arrow, so that when he pulls that arrow out of the quiver and puts it in that bow, it will hit the mark. He knows it will hit the mark, if he has an arrow that is straight.

Oh listen, while he's sharpening the head that he's going to put on there, he's got a vision of where that arrow is going to go, and while he's putting the feathers in the back of it, so carefully, so that that arrow will fly straight through the air and not be caught one way or another. All the while he's got a vision of pulling that arrow out of the quiver, putting it in the bow and letting it go.

Can we see the patterns in these Old Testament pictures of a godly home? Every one of them has a vision in it! There's a vision wrapped up right in the middle of that picture! And not only a vision, but work to do, and methods, and carefulness and planning and meticulous work, and I mean lots of work. Day in and day out. Don't you think that mighty man took care to make sure that his arrows would hit the mark? Don't you think he took care? What if it misses? What will happen to him if it misses?

Do you ever think about this? To a man of war, is there anything more valuable than an arrow that will hit the mark? Is there anything more valuable? Oh, happy is the man that has his quiver full of them. Of arrows that will hit the mark. I don't know about you...but I'm making arrows. And by God's grace I plan to shoot them. And I plan for them to hit the mark. And I've already got my sights set on a few marks. God knows where they go. I don't know about you, but I'm making arrows. And I mean, I'm holding the stick up, and I'm shaving it off. And I'm holding the stick up and I'm shaving it off. And it gets painful sometimes if you shave off of that stick. I'm holding the stick up, and I'm shaving it off. I don't know about you, but I'm making arrows. And I want my arrows to count. "As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them." Arrows that have been made to hit the mark.

Brethren, let's make them count. Let's make them count. You know, a statement that grieves my heart when I hear people say it? "Well, I think my children will turn out alright." I'm sorry, but I've got my sights set a little higher than that, than "alright". "Well I think they'll make it." Well, I'm sorry, but I've got my sights set a little higher than that. Let's make some arrows. Let's make the arrows count. It is in our hands to do it.

Isaiah 58 is the Old Testament example of a Spirit-filled life. Did you ever study Isaiah 58 that way? You should do it sometime. You want to see an Old Testament example of a Spirit-filled life, read Isaiah 58. Now you can learn a lot about fasting in Isaiah 58, but you can learn a whole lot more than just about fasting. It's an Old Testament example of a Spirit-filled, powerful life. But in the midst of all that, God is telling Israel some things that they should stop doing, and God is telling Israel some things that He'll do for them, and things that they'll do, if they get their life clear before God. Here now, we get back to the revival meetings. We're talking about revival. We're talking about getting revived by the Spirit of God, we're talking about getting the sin out of our lives and cleaning up for God and I believe in all that! Praise God for it! But that revival better go a little bit further than just the souls of men that are around us. It better touch the souls that are in our homes.

Let's start reading in the middle of verse 9, at the word "if". That great big, little word "if".

9.b. "If thou take away from the midst of thee, the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity,

10. and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity and thy darkness be as the noonday;

11. And the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in drought; then the Lord shall make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12. Then they that shall be of thee, shall build the old waste places and thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations."

And that's where I'd like to park, right there.

The foundations of many generations... One of the fruits of this powerful, Spirit-filled life is those who live that way, raise up the foundations of many generations! Now let's think about that for a moment. Now we're looking at a foundation. A minute ago, we were building a house, now we're building a foundation. Everybody in this room knows, the higher the building the stronger the foundation. Some of these big skyscrapers in the big cities around here, they go way down into the ground when they lay the foundation, so they can build that skyscraper way up into the sky. And you know as well as I do, if you're going to make a one-story slab house, all you need to do is pour about 3-4 inches of cement on the ground and up you go with the one story. Well my question tonight is this. How many generation foundations are you laying brothers and sisters? "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations!"

Listen! How many generation foundation are you raising up tonight? Did you ever think of it before? You are the foundation of the next generation. It will grow up on you! Where are you at? The next generation will grow up on you! You're the foundation for the next generation! And the next generation is the foundation for the next generation. What kind of a foundation are we laying, brothers and sisters? It is in our hands. How many generation foundation do you want to lay? When Israel was in her glory, when Israel lived in power, when Israel lived in strength, Israel laid the foundation of many generations, many generations. How many generation foundation are you laying tonight? Do you see the picture? Do you see the picture? How strong is your foundation? How sure is your foundation? How deep is your foundation? Well, I'll give you this testimony. I'm here tonight because of the weak foundations that I saw. When I was in the Baptist Church a few years back, I looked around. I started looking around, and I noticed that just about everybody in the congregation lost their children to the world. How deep was their foundation? What kind of foundation did they have, if in the first generation they lost their children to the world? They didn't have very much foundation, did they? And way back then, I looked at that and said, "Wait a minute. I'm not going to lose my children to the world. There's no way. I'm not sticking around here. I'm not losing my children to the world. I aim for my children to love God when they grow up." And that was one of the motivations that caused me to start looking and praying, "Lord are there people, are there people in this country, who keep their children? Who keep the next generation, and go on, and their children go on for God?" That was one of the cries on my heart. That's the problem in America today. They are raising either a "no-generation foundation", or a "one-generation foundation", that's about all they get.

Have we swallowed it, with them? Have we?

I read an article, oh; it's a couple of years ago now, on America and what it was like 200 years ago. We're going to examine the foundation now. This article had to do with what America was like 200 years ago. It was very revealing as I read it. And this article had to do with the intellectual pursuits of America now and 200 years ago, but it's very revealing in many other areas besides that. You note, I'll share with you some of the things that the article spoke about:

200 years ago, in America, this land where we live, children learned, they began to learn Greek and Hebrew at the age of 6, in this country. In this country, by the age of 10, children had put off all silly-mindedness, and were preparing themselves for the professions, for life, for real work, for college or whatever it is, by the age of 10, in America, 200 years ago. The children had shaken off the silly-mindedness, the play-mindedness, the fun life - they had shaken that off by the age of 10, and set themselves to pursue the serious things of a real life, by the age of 10. In America, 200 years ago, Yale and Harvard, those were the two strong Bible colleges in America 200 years ago, were receiving college students at the age of 12 and 13 years old. Let me give you some of the entrance exams. You could not get into Yale or Harvard University, which were solid Bible schools in those days, you could not get into

those Universities, until you could break down into the parts of speech a paragraph in Greek and Hebrew and Latin. Now some of us probably couldn't break one down in English! But those students had to be able to take a paragraph that was written in the Greek language, and break it down and diagram it - noun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition - they had to be able to part that paragraph in Greek and Latin and Hebrew. And they got into college by the age of 12 or 13. Now let me say this. I'm not lifting up intellectualism tonight, I'm against it. But it does show me something. Those children must have been disciplined if they learned that by the age of 12 or 13. Master things like that without rigor, and discipline and many hours of work and memorization and all of that, you don't do it, isn't that right schoolteachers?

In America 200 years ago, there were multitudes of 12-year-old boys that could handle the business while father was away. Run it completely. Order the stock, meet the customers, make the change, handle the business deals, meet with the customers, hire and fire employees. There were multitudes of 12-year-old boys who could run the whole business while father was away, 12 years old. And by the way, multitudes of young ladies who could do the same, guiding the home.

Two hundred years ago, the children of America had 3 books. Pilgrim's Progress, Foxes Book of Martyrs, and the Bible. That's all they had. Now we have so many books, so many silly novels. I'm so, so weary, weary! Of these silly, so-called Christian novels! Oh they just grieve my heart every time I see one of them laying around. Parents don't give that kind of garbage to your children to read. Fill their hearts with this! Fill their hearts with this (the Word of God). That's what the children grew up on 200 years ago, and I'd say we're a long shot off from where they turned out. I'm afraid we have given ourselves over to the philosophies of the world concerning our children, and we think that childhood is a time of fun and play and a care freeness for our children, and we want to extend it as long as we can for them. That's not the way they looked at it 200 years ago. By the age of 10 and 11 years old, the children were preparing themselves for a real life, in a real world, by the age of 10 or 11 or 12. Serious minded children, filled with maturity. I've said this statement, and I'll say it tonight, I don't know about you, but I'm raising adults, I'm not raising children. I'm raising adults. Now you think about that statement for a minute. You get a complete different result at the end. If you're raising children, you'll have children when you're done. But if I'm raising adults, I'll have adults when I'm done, and I want adults! We've got enough children out there, that are 21 years old, that are still filled with nothing but play and frolic and jokes and silly-mindedness and everything is play to them. And I'm a good example of it. I never decided to grow up until I was 23 years old. When I got converted, all of a sudden it dawned on me, "There's a real life to live." And I feel like I'm about 10 years behind. But I have set myself that my children aren't going to be 10 years behind. I'm raising adults. What are you raising brother?

What are you raising? What's the mentality in your mind? Do you think, "Well, maybe when they're 16 or 17, yeah, then we'll get them to settle down."? No, if you've got that in your mind, you're raising children.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 16. You know this verse. I've preached on this verse here already, but I'd like to look at it in the context of a godly home.

1Corinthians16: 14, 15, and 16

"Let all your things be done with Charity.

I beseech you brethren, ye know the house of Stephanus, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

That ye submit yourselves unto such and to everyone that helpeth with us and laboreth.

The house of Stephanus. I beseech you, therefore brethren, submit yourselves to the house of Stephanus. The house of Stephanus? The whole household of Stephanus. And how you know that the whole house has addicted themselves to the work of the ministry. What I see here is the picture of a godly home. Conversion came to the house of Stephanus. Stephanus got converted. Stephanus' wife got converted. And the children that were old enough got converted. And the whole family addicted themselves to the work of the ministry. That was the house of Stephanus. May God give us a vision like that tonight, that it may be said of our family, 10 years from now, "That whole family is given over to the work of God!" May it be said of our homes 10 years from now, "That whole family is sold out to live for God! It doesn't matter how old they are, you can tell there's a zeal in the heart." And I'm talking about the little ones too! If you live a life of zeal and joy before them, the little ones will want to serve God in their innocence! Yes they will! They'll want to pass out tracts and they'll want to go out preaching and they'll want to go to New York City, and they'll want to sing and they'll want to be in devotions and they'll want to do all the godly things that you do. May it be said of our families 10 years from now, "That whole house is given over to the work of God. Everyone of the children just wants to love the Lord, and serve Him and be a blessing." May it be said of our families 10 years from now. And I know there's a lot of small families here, you've just got a few little children, Oh, what a perfect time for you to rise up in your spirit tonight, and say, "Oh God, I want that mountain. I'll have that mountain." May God give us the Spirit of Caleb tonight.

Some of you young people that are not married yet, may the Lord put this kind of a vision within your heart. This kind of a vision. Don't settle for anything less. Settle for nothing less. Shoot for the stars.

A year and a half ago, as I was preparing a message at our home congregation, on the home, I did a study of the Jewish home. It was one of the most revealing studies I ever did. I was so excited by the time I got done with that study, I could hardly wait 'til it was time to preach. You know it's that way sometimes. Sometimes you have a burden, and it's rough to preach and you bear the burden of the message before you preach it, but sometimes it's just the most exciting thing to get up and share what the Lord has put on your heart and this was one of those days. I studied into the life of a Jewish home, I studied Jewish history, and went back into the books and saw how their homes were and how they raised their children, it put such a vision in me. It confirmed the testimony and vision of my own heart that to have that kind of a vision is the right thing. And to be totally consumed with raising your children for God is exactly the way that Israel raised theirs for God!

Oh, when God's people get totally consumed with raising their children, they'll raise up godly children! Israel was consumed. Their home, the way they built their house, said "We want to raise up a family for God." They built a house with small rooms in it, and one big room in the center, where the family did most things. They cooked in there, they ate in there, they had devotions in there, they had hospitality in there, they ministered to strangers in there, it was the central part of the home. And they kept the family in there.

You see in Israel's day they only had one light that they carried around the house. Now we've got a light in every room. Turn all the lights on in the room and the children scatter. This room, that room, this room, that room, and here's mom and dad, sitting in the living room all by themselves. It wasn't that way in Israel's day. You had one light. You put the light in the main room of the house and all the children gathered together. What a beautiful picture. I'm not against electricity, but you know, we need to be careful with electricity. Do you understand? The Amish men who don't have electricity, they just put the light in one room and the whole family gathers. I'm not for getting rid of the electricity; I'm for gathering the family.

They built their homes, because they had raising children in mind. As I studied, it was a blessing to study the Sabbath evening. And the way that they conducted the Sabbath Eve, that was Friday evening. Every Friday evening they had a ritual that they went through in the home. Once father got off of work, he arose up, changed his clothes and went to the synagogue. Only the fathers went to the synagogues on Friday evening. The rest of the family stayed home. The fathers went to the synagogue for prayer and to be ministered to for preaching and for prayer, and then while the father was away at the synagogue, the whole house was being changed. Oh they were getting out the best dishes they had, and they were preparing the best of food that they had in the house; I don't know what that was, but they got the better food. You know, company type food out, on Friday evenings, and mother was there preparing for it, and the children got their clean clothes on and they took their baths on Friday evening and they got all cleaned up in preparation for Sabbath. And they were waiting for father to come home. And as father came home in the evening, after the synagogue meeting was over with, father came home, all the children were waiting for him there. And the table was set, and the Sabbath light was lit, and all the children and the wife were waiting for the father to come home. And when the father came home, the children had lined up, one after another and wait for the father, because when he came through the door of the house, he'd walk up to each one of his children and put his hand upon their head and put the blessing of Israel upon them.

Can you picture it tonight? Can you picture that godly home? Where all those children are lined up, and they have such a reverence and such a respect for their father. And he's such a high priest in that home, that the children are lined up waiting for him to come home with anticipation in their heart. And as father comes home, he walks in and sees all the children there and the table is set for the Sabbath evening meal and the Sabbath light is lit and the children are clean and they have their nice clothes on, and they're all standing there lined up, waiting for father to pronounce the blessing of Israel upon them. And I'm not sure what the blessing of Israel was. But father would go to each of the children as they waited reverently and looked up at them, and he'd put his hand on their head, and he'd pray the blessing of Israel upon the child. And then he'd come to the next one, and put his hand on their head, and pray the blessing of Israel on the child and go all the way down the line. I don't know - if he had twelve children, it took a while, all the way down the line, putting the blessing of Israel on each one of the children.

I wonder if we could get away with that today. Or would our children giggle at us? I wonder if we could be that kind of a high priest in our home today. Or would our children giggle at us and wonder what we're doing. Oh what a sweet picture.

The Jewish father taught the children God's Word. Day in and day out those fathers were consumed with teaching their children God's Word. Everything they did had a reason. "This is why we pray, here's the verse for it..." "This is why we do this, here's the verse for it..." "This is why we have this light, here's the verse for it..." "This is why we have this sign on the outside of the door, here's the verse for it..." "Here's a verse, here's a verse, and here's a verse." And the children learned, from little, up. I mean from the time they were sucking children, they learned why they did what they did and what the verses were behind everything they did. He taught them God's Word.

The father taught the children how to read. Children didn't go away to school to learn how to read. The father taught the children how to read in the Jewish home. Do you know what he did it with? With this (holding up the Word of God). Do you know what his motive was? "I want my children to be able to read the Bible as soon as they can. So I'm going to teach them how to read, before they get to school, I'm going to teach my children how to read, because I want my children to read the Bible. I want my children's hearts to be full of the Word of God!" So the father would sit the children down in the evening and teach them

how to read. And he'd start just with the letters, the Hebrew alphabet, and write out the Hebrew alphabet. And once the children learned the alphabet, then he would find words out of the Bible - GOD; MAN; all those kind of words; and he'd put those words up on the board and the children would learn those words out of a Bible, and then he'd make the sentence a little bit bigger, out of the Bible. And slowly but surely, consistently day after day, the father would teach them until the child by the age of 5 could read out of this book.

He also taught the children to memorize scripture. The children learned to memorize scripture long before they could read. As soon as the children could talk, they were learning to memorize scriptures and poems and proverbs and songs to sing; as soon as the children could understand words they were taught by rote and repetition, all the scriptures. And one of the first Psalms that the children memorized was Psalm 119. Have we lost the vision? Are we getting soft? I think we are. I don't think we realize the power of the little minds of the children that we have. Those children can memorize scripture so fast, it will make your head spin. You give them the Sermon on the Mount, you give your children that are 5 or 6 years old the Sermon on the Mount and they'll have it memorized in one year. One year. Give them Psalm 119 and they'll have it memorized in one year. That would be alright, wouldn't it? That'd be alright, if your 5 year old could quote the sermon on the mount, that'd be alright, wouldn't it?

Methodically, the father catechized the children, God's ways, in God's ways. And let me just say something here. Most of us that are in this room today, we would say to those that ask us, we don't have a written standard. Alright. If we don't have a written standard, then we better get busy. We'd better get busy. If we're not going to have a written standard, then we better get busy. And take this book and break it down and put it in our children and teach them why we wear a covering, and why we dress modestly, and why we kneel for prayer, and why we raise our hands when we sing sometimes and why we go out to Africa and preach the gospel. We'd better get busy with this book and teach our children why we do all the things we do! If you do that diligently, you won't need any standard. Your children's hearts will be full of the Word of God. Full and running over.

Only the boys went to school. The girls didn't go to school in a Jewish home. The girls learned school at home. But they didn't learn a whole lot of school. They learned how to take care of the home. They stayed home with momma. But when the boys were 8 years old, they went away to school. Now who do you suppose they got to train those 8-year-old boys? No reflection on any schoolteachers in the room, now. Who do you suppose they got to train those little boys? Just any old young person they could find that needed a job? No way. They found the most spiritual, mature Rabbi, that they could get, and put him in the school to train those boys. Now why did they do that? They're raising up leaders for the nation of Israel, that's why they did that! They put the most spiritual men into that. Well today we've got that thing all turned around. We put the most spiritual men out in front of the adults, and we find the young ones and put them in front of the children to teach them. We've got that thing turned around. Those spiritual men need to be putting into the hearts of those children the ways of God and the words of God.

What am I saying in all this? I'm not saying we ought to go back to the Jewish home. I'm not saying that. I'm saying that Israel raised their children on purpose. And they had a multitude of methods, and their lives were consumed with raising their children. And I really believe tonight if we get a vision like that, and get consumed with raising our children, we would see those kind of results. We would see those kind of results.

Is it any wonder, when we look back over all these illustrations and realize that every one of those illustrations is packed with vision, method and action. Vision, method and action. Vision, method and action! Polished Cornerstones! Nurtured Plants! Building the House! Making the Arrows! Vision, method and action. And that's exactly what Israel did. They took the vision and the method and produced the action and they raised up godly children. They were raising children for Yahweh. Their whole life revolved around raising their children.

Well, are we willing to pay the price? I think we could probably get some older ones to stand up and give some testimonies tonight. I think that they'd probably admonish everyone of us to pay the price. I believe they would. The older ones would stand and say to the younger ones, "Pay the price, pay it all, don't hold back, and don't let up one bit! Give your whole heart to it!" I think that's what they'd tell us tonight. But how many are willing to pay the price? How many are willing to make the sacrifice. How many are willing to change the priorities of their life for the sake of raising their children? How many? Not very many. Not very many. You say, "How do you know that?" Look around. Look around.

If the generation before us would have paid the price, there would have been multitudes of wise old men and women who had raised up many, many children who were on fire for God. If the generation before us would have paid the price, there would have been multitudes of examples for us to look to. But there aren't. At least, I don't find a lot myself. Maybe you know of more than I do, but I don't find a lot. I don't find them.

If we'll pay the price and make the sacrifice, and change our priorities, we'll get results. We'll get the results.

Turn to Psalm 112. We'll see this verse again before we're done, but I think it's worthy to look at it this evening in light of the vision we're talking about.

Psalm 112.

"Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord that delighteth greatly in His commandments.

His seed shall be mighty upon the earth. The generation of the upright shall be blessed."

There's a promise. "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon the earth." You can just picture this evening a godly man, living out before His children a godly life with enthusiasm and delight. What do I mean? I mean a father whose children know that he loves to pray. A father whose children know that he loves to discipline himself. A father whose children know that he loves to obey the Bible. A father whose children know by the enthusiasm of the life that he lives behind closed doors, that he loves God, that he loves God's Word, that he loves God's people, that he wants to obey God's will, that he loves to pray, that he loves to fast, he loves to read his Bible, he loves to live a holy life, he loves to dress the way he does, he has a reason for everything he does! Where you find a man that lives that way behind closed doors before his children, you'll find a bunch of children that will rise up and serve God! That's what it says, right here. "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments." Delights greatly in His commandments! "Praise God! Let's go to prayer meeting tonight! Praise God! It's church again! Let's go children!" That's what we're talking about. We're talking about a man who loves God and loves God's word and lives that out before his children and you know, your children will run after that. Your children get excited about whatever you're excited about.

What am I saying? The end result is children who are not mediocre. But children that are mighty upon the earth. And that verse means that they'll have a mighty influence on this world where they live. Isn't that what we want? That's what I want. I don't know what you want, but I know what I want. I want children that will be a mighty influence in this world where we live. I don't know what you want, but I know what I want. That hit the mark.

May I say it again: Very few people are really willing to pay the price that I'm talking about tonight. Very few. Most people are too busy. Too busy. Too busy? Too busy to raise up godly children? That doesn't make any sense in my mind! Too busy to make arrows that hit the mark? That doesn't make any sense in my mind! Too busy for that? Too busy making money! Too busy building a business! Too busy to raise up children that hit the mark, in a world that's falling apart? That doesn't make any sense in my mind. But it's the truth. Most people are too busy. They don't want to pay the price. And you get what you pay for brother and sisters. You get what you pay for. You will, I promise you that. It may be 30 years before you see what you paid for, but you'll get what you paid for.

If I could just speak for a moment to Crossroads Church tonight, just here in closing. I know there are a lot of visitors here. But just to speak to you as a congregation. You're still laying the foundations of this church, young brothers and sisters; you're still laying the foundations of this church. Make this one of the stones in the foundation. Let it be known in Holmes County, Ohio, that the people over there at Crossroads Mission Church, they raise their children. They do it on purpose. They do it with method, they do it meticulously, they make it a priority. You can tell it by just looking at their eyes and dropping into their home that they are consumed over there with raising their children. Let that be one of the blocks in the foundation of this church. You'll never be sorry. You'll never be sorry. What you'll raise up is a generation of people that will pass you up. You'll raise up a generation of young people that will pass you right up if you'll do it.

It's not a matter of some having it and others not having it. It's a matter of obedience to God's Word tonight. We're going to give an invitation this evening. It's an invitation to couples. Married couples, soon-married couples, family men and women, the invitation is open to you tonight. And may I remind you, of what the word repentance means tonight. We're going to carry this repentance word into our home meetings. True repentance, is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. And maybe tonight, it maybe tonight, that some of you are not willing to repent yet. That's very possible. We'll give you that room. But I hope before this week is over, that you'll find repentance concerning your home. It will take the same faith to change your home, as it took to change the other areas of your life. Old fashioned repentance. "Lord, I'm going the wrong way, and I repent." So we're going to have an invitation. We're not going to sing the invitation; I don't think we need to. We're not trying to sing anybody down the aisle tonight. We're just going to see if we have enough room down here for the couples, who are willing to dedicate themselves, to making their children a priority. And let me say this before. I'm going to make the invitation hard tonight and not easy. I mean, you want to change the way you're going. Not just that you've been inspired tonight and you want to go forward, "Lord I want to raise my children for God...." I'm not talking about that. I mean something clicked inside your heart tonight and you're going to change the direction of your home. If you're willing to do that, then the invitation is open to you.

Shall we stand to our feet and close our eyes.

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