

Pentecostal Homes

by Martin Knapp

A Pentecostal home is one that is built on God's design for marriage, with a foundation of love, harmony, and belief, and is fruitful, obedient, kind, and hospitable.

Scripture: Genesis 2:24, Deuteronomy 11:16, Psalm 128:3, Romans 12:13, 1 Corinthians 7:14, Ephesians 5:25, Ephesians 6:1, Hebrews 13:2

Topics: "Christian Marriage", "Family Values"

Description

Martin Knapp preaches about the importance of Pentecostal influences in molding faithful, loving, harmonious, believing, fruitful, obedient, kind, and hospitable homes. He emphasizes the divine foundation of marriage, the necessity of husbands loving their wives sacrificially, the obedience of children, and the significance of being right with God before entering into marriage. Knapp warns against marrying unbelievers, reforming partners through marriage, marrying illegally divorced individuals, and marrying for the wrong reasons. He paints a vivid picture of Pentecostal homes as celestial oases in a world of inhospitality, filled with God's protection, mercy, love, and divine truth.

Transcript

One of the sweetest pictures of Pentecostal life is a family molded by its influence. Such were the families of New Testament mention, and such are all families which are molded by Pentecostal influences.

They were faithful to the marriage relation. Freeloze-ism had no place under the Pentecostal dispensation. The union of two hearts and lives as exemplified at creation in Eden, and enforced by Jesus and His disciples is the divine foundation of the Pentecostal family. Whatever influence tends to weaken or destroy this foundation is not of God. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. ii. 24). Shrinking from the burdens of family life, inability to move in certain social circles and live in style, a desire to avoid family restraints and similar sordid motives, deter many marriages and thus invite many of the ills which follow ignoring this divine provision for human betterment and happiness. The divine design of marriage is fourfold: (a) Companionship. "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. ii. 18). (b) Helpfulness. "I will make him an helpmeet for him" (Gen. ii. 18). (c) Purity. (See I Cor. vii. 2.) (d) Children. "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. i. 28). It is divinely declared to be lawful in all. "Let marriage be had in honour among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge, (Heb. xiii. 4). Sin deranged it and turned Eden into thorns. Redemption restores it and turns thorns into Eden. The Edenic design of

marriage condemns all union for lust, or money, or social position, or any other selfish motive. Pentecostal marriages are those in which God's will is sought and done, and lay the foundation of families that will honor Him.

They are loving homes. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it" (Eph. v. 25). Christ demonstrated His love for the church by laying down His life for her, by His patience with her faults, by providing for her needs, by sweet and constant companionship, by exemplifying the spirit which she should possess, and by every needed sacrifice and self-denial for her good, suffering the most cruel and shameful death for her deliverance and future glory. This is a Bible picture of a Pentecostal husband. God's grace so sways him in his home that his wife can say of him, as the companion of S. A. Keen, author of "The Pentecostal Library," wrote of him: "We who knew him best could say, He lived at home just what he taught in public." Scripture is very explicit and imperative as to this love on the part of the "head of the house." "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies" (Eph. v. 28). "Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself" (Eph. v. 33). This commandment is so very important that God emphasizes it by frequent repetition; yet how it is disregarded! Husband, you can no more break this and retain God's favor than you can any other commandment. You can not slight your wife, give attentions due her to other women, and censure and scold her, and be guiltless. You can not insist on any selfish indulgence which pains her simply for your own pleasure, and please God. A Pentecostal blessing which does not bring to a husband this love is defective. A home in which it does not exist is not a Pentecostal home. Without it no one has a divine right to marry, and in so doing he invites the divisions and divorces and home-hell which so frequently is found. In our holiness meeting recently a man witnessed that salvation had prevented his divorce and had led to the conversion of his wife, and made them, with their six children, a happy family. A husband without this love for his wife is like a stove without fire, a lamp without oil, and must not complain if she does not respond with the love and service which would naturally flow if he were what God commands him to be. Hence, when husband and wife are right with God, their home, no matter how humble, is a heavenly paradise, but when wrong, thorns and thistles choke the roses out. The reason why some men do not get right in religion is because they refuse to apply its principles to this relation. The Holy Ghost will not abide in the heart of a domineering husband. Lust can not be successfully substituted for love, nor bossing for blessing. Thousands of unhappy homes would be speedily transformed if the husband, instead of perpetually quoting "wives, obey your husbands," would give practical and constant demonstration of "husbands, love your wives."

They are harmonious homes. "But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything" (Eph. v. 24). The husband's headship in the family is acknowledged by the wife. He, being obedient in loving her, she modestly and Scripturally "obeys him," but it is the obedience of love and trust, and not of fear. She realizes that this duty is as divinely hers as his to love and provide, and in it she feels a sweet and keen delight, a figure used of God to picture the gladness with which His bride, the Church, learns and does his will. Many professed Christians laugh at this clearly-revealed obligation of wives to their husbands, but it is just as much the Word of God as any other Bible truth, and its disobedience is the cause of the wreckage of what might be happy homes. He who tinkers with God's laws dares his lightnings. Trees must be set with roots instead of tops in the soil, or they will die. When the trustful submission of a true wife is planted in the soil of a husband's Christlike love, the tree of a Pentecostal home will bloom. No such husband will knowingly require of his wife anything unreasonable or wrong, nor will such a wife take advantage of his love to her to do him any injustice. Each other's rights, and likes and dislikes, are held sacred, and where both can not see alike the widest freedom of

conscience will be freely given, and they will thus keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." What a contrast to the strife and discord of many so-called Christian homes.

They are believing homes. "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" (I Cor. vi. 14). God can not build a Pentecostal home with any other material than a Pentecostal experience in both the husband and the wife. All who ignore this reject such a home. For the following reasons God's children can not marry unbelievers and be clear: God forbids it. It is as really a violation of His law as any other sin. There is no spiritual fellowship between a child of God and a rebel against Him, such as all unconverted persons are. Mental and physical affinity does not suffice for spiritual communion. God's blessing never rests upon a marriage which He forbids; hence who marries an unconverted person forfeits God's blessing. Each has different aims in life, one living for Christ and the other not. An unconverted companion often becomes jealous because God is loved more than himself. A goat and a sheep never make a good team. Their sources of enjoyment are opposite. One who will not promise to be true to God you can not trust to be true as a companion. Such marriages are usually unhappy. The Christian who is thus ensnared usually repents when it is too late. The writer refused to marry a friend to an unconverted man. They lived together in misery until two children were born and then separated. The unconverted are frequently regardless of observance of the laws of marital self-control and purity, without which marriage is degraded, and both suffer in mind, soul and body. The children of such marriages are robbed of the sacred prenatal influences to which they have a right, and which largely affect their destiny. The unconverted often insist upon ruinous sexual indulgence and prenatal murder, debasing the sacred bond of marriage into a license for lust. You have no right to choose for the father or mother of your children a godless person. Both husband and wife need all of God's grace that is for them in order to exercise the forbearance and self-denial which marriage demands. There are always matters arising upon which there will be a division. One wants to go to church, the other on a stroll or visit; one wants to give for the Gospel, the other is opposed to it; one welcomes God's ministers, the other dreads them; one wishes to rear the children for God and the Church, the other for the world. How many mothers have aching hearts because the father leads the children to the dance, the theater, the horse-race and the circus.

The fact that God sometimes overrules, so that the unbelieving companion is converted, is no argument in favor of such marriages. More frequently the believer is lost. A kind disposition, personal beauty, a mere profession of religion, or church membership and promises of reformation, should never be accepted as substitutes for vital experimental piety. All who have not that are practical "unbelievers." If, through infatuation or personal magnetism or natural affection, one becomes engaged to an unconverted person, the first duty to God, the person and yourself, is to wisely, firmly, tenderly, and quickly as possible, break off the engagement, the same as any other sin, otherwise it will sooner or later be bitterly regretted. Though unconverted people sometimes live happily together on a worldly plane, yet such instances are rare, and in no wise effects the law which is to govern the actions of Christians. The aims of worldlings are one; those of Christians and worldlings are opposite.

Never marry a person to reform him. Why not? Because you can not reform him that way. Salvation not matrimony, is God's prescription for such persons. Many have been deceived by this device, and discovered the mistake only when too late. A friend of mine married a young man on this plea, though repeatedly warned of the danger. In less than six months he threatened to kill her, and they soon separated, he to go on in sin, she to a blighted life and to fill an early grave. If your love and influence is powerless to win your friend before marriage, much less will it be after, when you have lost the power of religion by marrying against the will of God.

Never marry an illegally divorced person. Many lives have been wrecked on this rock. All persons who are divorced for other reasons than the single cause mentioned in Matt v. 32 and xix. 9, are illegally divorced, and marriage of them or with them is adultery. And as no adulterer can enter heaven, all such, unless they break off the unholy alliance, are lost. Neither time, nor affection, nor children, nor public approval, call atone for this express violation of God's law.

Never marry to please others, nor for money, nor a home, nor social position, nor for any other reason less than pleasing God and doing Him better service. Thousands marry from social motives, and reap a harvest of disappointment. If God's blessing is received, His will must be learned and done. A single state with His favor is Paradise, compared to a married life without it. Marriage without true love is like a furnace without fire.

It is no reason you should marry a person because infatuated. Two persons may be of such temperament and so keyed mentally and physically as to become infatuated almost at sight. Many mistake this feeling for true love and the basis of mat and by its balmy breezes are wafted into the harbor of a wedded life, only to discover, when the glamour is gone, that they are mismated and mistaken. The bright morning dewdrops of intense infatuation are soon dissipated by the hot sun of the long day of marriage endurance. (For a fuller treatment of this point, see my work on " Impressions," pages 27-40.)

Be sure and learn God's will as to whom and when to marry. You can afford to make no mistake at this point, and victory here means victory at all other points. He knows just who you need and who needs you, and with whom you can be the most useful and happy; and if you will claim His counsels He will make you sure. (See Impressions," pages 52-69.) Never marry while there is doubt at this point, and be sure never to mistake your own will, or the will of others, for God's will in this matter. Then all will be well. If you have married against these rules and find yourself the wedded companion of an unconverted person, then seek by penitence and prayer the fulness of God's favor and strive to will the wandering one to God.

Be right with God yourself. Be sure that you are converted, and also that your heart is fully cleansed from all sin and selfishness and filled with the Holy Spirit. Until then you are unfitted for the holy offices which marriage brings. "Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived. Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul ... that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children the days of the heavens above the earth" (Deut. xi. 16-21).

They are fruitful homes. "I desire therefore that the younger widows marry, hear children, rule the household, give none occasion to the adversary for reviling" (I Tim. v. 14). With the exception of barriers because of health or providence, or devotion to some special work they are blessed with children. Child-rearing is magnified in the Bible. To ignore this one of the great ends of the institution of marriage, is a blow to its being and an insult to its divine Founder. People who are not willing to accept this obligation should remain single. God promises the righteous man that his wife "shall be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts of thine house: thy children like olive plants, round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord " (Ps. cxxviii. 3, 4). Families who selfishly evade this responsibility give occasion to the adversary for reviling in the following ways: By violating a Scripture duty and privilege. By taking the responsibility of defeating all the good which would have been done by children rightly reared. By preventing the existence of immortal spirits which might have filled earth with blessing, and heaven with shouts of joy forever. By robbing earth of the existence, blessing and example of what might have been a Pentecostal family. By depriving themselves of those whom God designed to be a comfort and support in old age. By giving others reason to think that the deadly drugs of the world

may have been employed to aid in defeating God's purpose. By depriving home of what God designs shall be among its greatest blessings, sweet, bright, young faces. By refusing to furnish others to take the places of those who are falling in Christ's Church. These are a few of the fearful responsibilities that parents must take if they willfully destroy this natural fruit of the marriage relation. The hands of multitudes are red with the murder of millions of the innocent unborn. Prenatal murder is one of the most horrible crimes which curses earth. Its victims are utterly defenseless, and its perpetrators outrage the laws both of nature and of grace. Pentecostal families abhor it with all of its accessories, while sham Christian homes reveal their spuriousness by this connubial crime, as, "without natural affection," and "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," they sink into the quicksands of this awful crime.

There are obedient homes. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. vi. 1-3). Disobedience and distrust of parents is family anarchy. Obedience to home government is the cornerstone of Christian character. Righteousness, prosperity and long life are promised to those who heed it. The opposite threatens all who reject it. Servants, neighbors or relatives who are invited into the sacred family circle, and by word or act or look encourage a child to distrust or disobey a parent, should be banished as messengers of hell. The child who disobeys is guilty of home treason, and the person who helps or harbors them in it is a party to the crime. Pentecostal families are obedient families. When children are otherwise it can usually be traced to some Pentecostal lack in one or both of the parents.

They are kind homes. "And be ye kind, one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as also God in Christ forgave you." All unkind words and acts are banished from Pentecostal homes to the Siberia of eternal exile. Regeneration enthrones kindness. The baptism by the Holy Ghost expels every unkind impulse. An experience which does not make one kind at home is a stupendous humbug. People who profess to be saved or sanctified "up to date," but who are unkind in church, business, or home relations, should go to the mourner's bench for lying. Those who make no professions, but are guilty, should go for harboring vipers. Much which is labeled religion advertises its counterfeit character by a break at this point.

They are hospitable homes. "Addicted to hospitality." We have no record of the conferences of that day, big or little, having to beg for entertainment or to resort to public boarding-houses. It would be vain to knock at the doors of a dead family for entertainment. Many families of professed Christians have this symptom of death. True Christian families always feel like reserving the best they have for others who may knock at their doors in His name. "Forget not to shew love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. xiii. 2). A revival of Pentecostal conversion always enthrones this grace, and its lack in many churches is good proof of spiritual destitution. "We need only reflect on the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles," says Professor Lumby of Cambridge, "to realize how large a part hospitality must have played in the early church as soon as the preachers extended their labors beyond Jerusalem. The house of Simon the tanner, where Peter was entertained many days (ix. 43); the friends who at Antioch received Paul and Barnabas and kept them for a whole year (xi. 26); the petition of Lydia, 'Come unto my house, and abide there' (xvi. 15); and Jason's reception of Paul and Silas at Thessalonica (xvii. 7) are but illustrations of what must have been the custom." Another says: "Nor is it God's purpose that the grace of hospitality should ever disappear from the Christian Church. We are exhorted in Scripture to use 'hospitality one to another, without murmuring' (1 Pet. iv. 9). To be 'given to hospitality' (Rom. xii. 13) is one of the marks by which Christians are ever to indicate that they, 'being many, are one body in

Christ.' Jesus regards its exercise toward His disciples as though it were a service rendered to Himself -- 'I was a stranger, and ye took me in' -- and will count it as one proof of that love whose crowning joy shall be the invitation, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father,' etc. (Matt. xxv. 34). There is, in many instances, a great lack of this grace among Christian people of today. Too often 'the prophet's room' is forgotten in building, buying or renting our dwelling houses. Too often we let little inconveniences that might readily be overcome hinder us from entertaining some of the Master's beloved disciples whose presence in the homes would bring blessings immeasurably greater than the trouble and expense it would make us to take them in. Too often the lack of hospitality in our churches makes it impossible to entertain revival workers and general religious gatherings which would do much to quicken and build up the work of God among us, and so the work declines -- largely on account of our selfishness. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. If we have erred in these respects in the past, let the future witness our reform, and henceforth, in the true gospel sense, let us use 'hospitality one to another, without murmuring.'"

They are celestial oases in the Saharas of earth's Great Desert of Inhospitability. A mark of the spuriousness of many so-called Christian homes is their deadness to this Pentecostal grace. A family that is a stranger to Pentecostal hospitality has not stepped even into the vestibule of a Pentecostal experience.

Such is a brief outline of such homes as God wishes to fill this earth. They have existed from Pentecost until the present day, and are multiplying. They are verdant islands in the great ocean of humanity, full of pleasant harbors safe and restful, and their fragrance is borne by celestial breezes very far. God Himself protects them, and delights and abides in them. They are among His brightest stars in the dark night of human woe.

Blessed homes and happy people,

Where the Saviour loves to dwell;

Where, uniting in His praises,

All redemption's story tell.

Where the Pentecostal fire

Leaps and shines and burns and glows,

Melting every selfish purpose,

Till each heart with love o'erflows.

Blessed homes and happy people,

Live the world to bless and cheer;

Witnesses of Jesus' power

Heaven itself to bring so near.

Such homes are surrounded by the marble walls of God's protecting providences. They are roofed by His mercy, and from their beautiful windows of faith they can always see the King in His beauty and the land

that is far off. They are heated by love, lighted with the electric radiance of divine truth, and watered by the celestial artesian fountain which continually springs up within. They are sections of the kingdom of God on earth. All who belong to them are already "in heaven." To die or welcome Christ and His coming will simply be moving up to more celestial shores. There is a hint that the King's purpose is, that there will be such removals frequently from one degree of glory to another for ever and ever!

What a contrast to the cold homes where selfishness and sin united reign. No prayer, no praise, no heavenly Christian love, no hope of a future home above, and no Christ to share life's joys or sorrows. Such a place is the object of God's curses and His judgments. Such are the families who reject God and who add to their rebellion, allegiance to the god of this world. Professing to be homes, they are pits of quicksand whose inmates are sinking down to doom. Such places are roofed by rebellion. windowed by unbelief, floored by doubt and foundationed by deception. Within lurks fear and wrong. God's lightnings are restrained from them only by infinite mercy, but soon will leap upon and destroy them. Professed Christian homes they may be, yet really feeders of the eternal flames.

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