

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“. . . Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY AND DEVOTION

Part One

by Lee Moses

In today's fast-paced world, it is more important than ever that families purpose to spend time together. And considering the rapidity and intensity with which the world hurls its anti-biblical influences at families, it is more important than ever that families purpose to spend time in ways that will counter these wicked influences.

Biblical Examples of Family Bible Study and Devotion

Abraham

Abraham was clearly a man of worship. When he first came to a place in the strange land of Canaan where he might pitch his tent, "*there builded he an altar unto the LORD*" (Genesis 12:7). This altar was a place to offer sacrifice to God in worship and thanksgiving. "*And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD*" (verse 8, emphasis LM). After separating from his nephew Lot, "*Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD*" (Genesis 13:18, emphasis LM). Abraham no doubt took time to explain to his household the significance of these altars, and to

discuss the wonders of the God they were worshipping.

It was several years before he had children of his own, but those children were doubtlessly exposed to Abraham's household worship. He told them the things he learned of God; he taught them obedience to the commandments of God; and he made clear that their allegiance was to God. "*And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him*" (17:23).

When Abraham ascended Mount Moriah to worship with his son Isaac, Isaac quickly perceived that something was different from normal: "*And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*" (22:7). Here was a young man who had observed his father's household worship sufficiently to know its common requisites and to recognize when anything departed from the pattern.

The influence of Abraham's household worship continued long after Isaac left home. In later years, Isaac and his son Jacob likewise built altars wherever they went (26:25; 33:20; 35:1). The LORD's

confidence in Abraham was not misplaced when He affirmed, "*For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him*" (18:19). Would that the same could be said of every father! Abraham would come to bless all nations (12:3; 22:18; Galatians 3:29), but he began by blessing his family.

Job

Job was "*perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil*" (Job 1:1; compare with verse 8). But a perfect and upright fearer of God is never complacent to enjoy his right relationship with God alone—Job wanted others to have that, particularly his family. When his children gathered at each others' homes for their birthday celebrations, Job was concerned that they might remove God from His proper place in their hearts: "*And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually*" (verse 5).

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upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth (Deuteronomy 11:19-21).

of their inferior covenant (2:1-4; 10:18-29). “[W]hatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4), and Christian parents have lessons to learn and hope to have through heeding these injunctions.

Lois and Eunice

Timothy the evangelist lived a life of Christian character and commitment that was respected wherever he went (Acts 16:2; Philippians 2:20-22). The apostle Paul extolled Timothy’s “*unfeigned faith*,” also divulging two main sources of it—“*When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also*” (2 Timothy 1:5). Timothy did not have this “*unfeigned faith*” because he inherited it at birth from his mother and grandmother. Neither was it only a matter of having a good example, although this certainly contributed. Lois and Eunice **taught** Timothy the Scriptures—“*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (3:15). If we want our children to be Timothys—those who serve the Lord from their youth and throughout their lives—it will take a similar commitment to teaching them the Scriptures from their youth.

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Job understood that in worldly settings, worldly thinking and worldly practices inevitably become part of the spiritually unprepared. Job was a wealthy and powerful man with myriad responsibilities, but he **continually** found time to worship with his family, and to counter potential godlessness that might creep into their hearts.

Commandments to Israelites

Moses left no doubt as to how often the families of Israel were to reflect upon the word of God:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign

God’s word was to pervade every fiber of every family’s fabric. Note that the Israelites were to teach the word of God to their children **diligently** and **often**. They were literally to recite the words again and again.¹ Not only this, but the parents were to be their children’s **primary** source of religious education. While it would not entirely encompass the enormity of this education, godly parents would doubtlessly have set aside time each day for the express purpose of learning God’s word.

Although Christian families are not bound by the commandments of Moses, should they be any less diligent and frequent in teaching their children? We who have a “*better covenant, which was established upon better promises*” (Hebrews 8:6), should we not make that covenant and its promises known to our children? Any neglect of our better covenant is more egregious than the Israelites’ neglect

¹ This is how the word for “teach diligently” (6:7, piel form of *šmn*) is defined in Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Johann Jakob Stam, trans. M. E. J. Richardson, CD-ROM ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), BibleWorks, v.9.

WHY MEN FAIL JESUS

by Dub McClish

Among Jesus' greatest causes of distress must have been those who failed Him. These included unbelievers as well as various disciples who abandoned, denied, or betrayed Him.

History proves that "human nature" is one of the great constants of our existence. Thus men continue to fail the Son of God for the same reasons they did when He lived among them, including the following:

- **Elitism.** He was not the king the Jews expected from their prophets, and could anyone from Nazareth amount to anything? (John 1:46). Intellectual elitists still reject Him and sneer at the poor dupes who believe in Him and His Word. Worldly "wisdom" blinds many (1 Corinthians 1:26–28). Hosts even of "disciples" reject His simple plan of salvation and church.

- **Selfishness.** The rich fool (Luke 12:13–27), the nine ungrateful lepers (Luke 17:17), and the disciples who could not bear Jesus' "hard teachings" (John 6:66) exemplify the utter selfishness of some who failed Jesus. Those who take the Lord's day for their own rest and/or recreation, those who never think of others, and those who never pause to thank God for His innumerable blessings all likewise fail Him. Jesus requires His disciples to "deny self" (Luke 9:23).

- **Covetousness.** The rich young ruler, who loved His riches more

than He loved the Lord and His Word (Matthew 19:22), and Judas, who delivered the Savior to His enemies for \$15.00 (26:15), demonstrate this trait that severed them from Him. Those today who live only for money and what it will buy, and who heap up riches only for the pursuit of their own pleasures and earthly pursuits, grossly fail Jesus (and themselves). Gaining the world in exchange for one's soul is a sorry swap (Luke 9:25).

- **Doubt and fear.** His fleshly brothers did not believe in Him (Mat. 13:57; John 7:5), numerous "believers" feared to say so publicly because of fear (John 7:13; 9:22; 19:38), and for fear, even Peter denied Him three times (Mark 14:66–72). Faced with ridicule or persecution, the hearts of many cower in fear. Fear causes them to conform to the world, deny the Biblical Creation account, or at least hold their faith in silence. If we are ashamed of Jesus, He will be ashamed of us (Mark 8:38).

- **Neutrality.** Pilate, the ultimate politician, sought to "prove" his "neutrality" in his hand-washing ceremony (Mat. 27:24). Neutrality does not exist when good and evil are involved. Men still strive in vain to serve two masters (Mat. 6:24), but failure to declare **for** Jesus is to declare **against** Him (12:30). We either serve Jesus or we fail Him. No "in between" exists.

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THE GREAT SALVATION

by Marvin L. Weir

Some questions will forever be etched in our minds, and the question the writer of Hebrews sets forth is one of those questions. It is a simple but profound question, and absolutely to the point. The question is, "*how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard*" (Hebrews 2:3). May we profit by a brief study of this question!

This Salvation Is Great! First, it is great when you think of the greatness of Him who saves. He is the heir of all things and the Maker of the world. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and "*the express image of His person.*" He upholds all things by the Word of His power, and is much better than angels could ever hope to be [See Hebrews 1:1-4].

Second, this salvation is great when you think of the terrible condition from which it saves. One can choose to be delivered from the wages of sin—eternal death (Romans 6:23). A person can "*have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of [his] trespasses, according to the riches of his grace*" (Ephesians 1:7).

Third, this salvation is great when you consider the obedient are as sons and daughters and heirs of life eternal. Such heirs have a better life here and "*in the world to come eternal life*" (Luke 18:30).

This Salvation May Be Neglected! "*We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them*" (Heb. 2:1). The KJV says, "*lest at any time we should let*

them slip.” One who allows an opportunity to be saved slip one time may be allowing it to slip for the last time! To neglect to study God’s Word is to neglect salvation! To neglect to obey the gospel is to neglect salvation! The process of neglecting, like the process of aimless drifting, may be easy and painless but such does not remove the terrible danger. One can neglect salvation without hating or verbally denying it, and this only makes the neglect more insidious.

This Salvation, If Neglected, Provides No Escape! Man, in his earthly wisdom, often considers himself more wise than God. Jehovah warns there is no escape from neglecting salvation. Man, in his pride, attempts to escape when God declares such escape

impossible. Can one escape hunger who neglects food? Can the business man escape ruin by neglecting his business? Can one escape darkness who refuses light? How will one escape the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23) who refuses to obey the gospel (God’s power unto salvation–Rom. 1:16)? How will one escape the doom of the lost if he rejects the Savior of the lost? How will one escape the condemnation of Hell if he neglects the salvation provided by the Son of God?

One who neglects his salvation will have only himself to blame. Will you not respond to the great salvation that is available and waiting for you?

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GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God’s commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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