

“Me & My Family Will Serve the Lord – part 2”

Hope Valley Baptist Church

June 25, 2006

Last week being father's day, the focus was on family. We had a parent child dedication and my message was based on the words of Joshua, when he called the people together and said basically, irregardless of who you choose to serve, “me & my family will serve the Lord.”

In that message I shared how he called the people together, had them reflect on God's blessings, called for a commitment - asking them to “choose the god you will serve.” We looked at how his commitment to follow the true God affected his family & others.

I encouraged you to similarly reflect on God's blessings in your life, think of gods that we serve (materialism, popularity, a person, sports, a job & even family) – then choose who or what you will serve. What will be first in your life? Your decision will also affect your family & others.

Today I want to build on that sermon & talk a little about what to do next. If you make the commitment to serve God, how do you do it, what's next? Jesus said **Luke 14:25-33.** *25 Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." 31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.*

We must count the cost. Whenever you are struggling about making a major decision, it is good to write out the pluses & minuses about making that decision. Count the cost & the rewards. There are cost & rewards in following Christ. There are cost and rewards of having a Christian home.

Beyond the cost & reward – how do you do it? It is good in life to have goals & visions and to be able to accomplish them, you need steps to take. The same is true in having & sustaining a Christian family.

You become a Christian at the point that you accept Christ as your savior. Your family becomes more of a Christian family as members accept Christ & prioritize Him in their lives, but then what's next how do you sustain that.

Let's break it down & start with the relationship of the husband and wife & even go a little further in the choice of a mate.

Dating & Marriage Relationship

1) both are to be Christians – **2 Cor. 6:14** *Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness?*

2) God is to be the center of the relationship – **Ecclesiastes 4:12** – refers to the strength of a friend & then adds *a threefold cord is not easily broken.*

3) no sex outside of marriage – not before, not with anyone you are not married to True Love Waits Campaign . . . make a commitment to God . . . **Exodus 20 :14** *You shall not commit adultery. I cor. 6:18 Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; for the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit with you , which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.*” -

It is important to realize what is right & wrong. We often get into situations & rationalize that things are OK. I once had some teenagers girls tell me about how they had failed in this area, but they quickly rationalized – we are better than most people at our school.

- We are not to measure ourselves by others, but by God's standards. We are also to realize that God is forgiving. God will forgive us from anything that we do. We are to confess and reconcile our relationship with God. Sin however, does have consequences and it could cost us greatly. So – no sex outside of marriage & if you have failed ask forgiveness first of God then to others.

4) **love & submission** - **Ephesians 5:21-25** *21 Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, -* This is an interesting passage & some will really like that I am reading it while others are concerned about what I am about to say. First I want us all to realize that when we read scripture, we must read it within the context of which it was written. Especially when we read a letter we must realize that it was originally written to a group of people at a certain time. Some may question what I just said, but let's look at the next chapter **Ephesians 6:5** *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of*

heart, as you obey Christ Why are the slaves to obey their masters, because the focus at this time was the change in one's life that God brings. Now I believe that God definitely would not approve of slavery in any form, but that change was to take place later. Jesus brought about radical changes and people could only take so much at a time. Ephesians 5:21 – gives a really radical call – be subject of submissive to one another. This was a totally male dominated society and to tell husbands & wives to be subject or submissive to one another was not the norm. It is a lot easier for wives to be subject to their husbands if the husbands are also subject to their wives. We are to submit to one another. The passage goes on to instruct the husbands to love the wives, but I want to add the wives are to love their husbands. We are to love each other deeply and to demonstrate that love through our actions.

- 5) **support each other** - This may sound obvious, but it isn't. We may get overly focused on what we are doing that we fail to show our concern & support for our spouse. Sometimes we may also become competitive with our spouse. Support each other. Build each other up.
- 6) **Communication is important.** I have heard that issues related to money are the biggest conflict in marriages. Money can certainly be a problem, but I think more important is communication. Poor communication can be so hurtful. There is so much pain from when we misunderstand on another or don't adequately communicate with one another. But when we communicate well. Show our support & love our marriages will be much stronger.

Parents to Children

- 1) **love them unconditionally** – We may feel that love, but again we need to communicate it. Sometimes we communicate what our children do wrong, much stronger than we communicate what they do right. They may feel that we would love them if You can feel in the blank. Love them if they do things that we want them to do or don't do things we don't want them to do. We need to hold up high standards for our children, but we need them to realize that no matter what we love them, that we love them unconditionally.
- 2) Going along with that is to **accept them for who they are.** We aren't to compare them to another child or have a goal for them to obtain something that we couldn't do. We are to realize that they are **a blessing not a burden.** Sometimes we may say things to make our children feel that they are a burden to us, but they need to realize that they are a blessing & always will be.
- 3) **teach them about God** – One of our most important responsibilities is to teach our children about God. We can't force them to be followers of Christ, but we can demonstrate the significance and importance of following Christ. We are to teach

them both through words and actions. **Proverbs 22:6** *Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.*

- 4) **discipline with love** – make sure they understand why – **Proverbs 13:24** *Those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent to discipline them.*
- 5) **praise is so important.** I have heard it said that it takes 7 positive statements to equal one negative statement. For some it may take more. Children deeply desire and need the praise of their parents. At times they ask for it directly at other times it is indirectly. How many times does a small child ask when they are doing something, Are you watching me? Are you watching? You are not watching me? . . . Sometimes when a child doesn't get positive attention they act out to get negative attention. We need to give our children attention & praise them often.

Children to parents

- 1) **realize that they may be new at this** & may mistakes, but **trust them**, they do really want the best for you.
- 2) **Respect them!!!** – **Ephesians 6:1-4** *-1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right* What does it mean to add “in the Lord”? Obey your parents as long as their teachings is not contrary to the teachings of Christ.. **2** *"Honor your father and mother"—this is the first commandment with a promise: 3* *"so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."* This has always been an interesting statement, Honor your parents and you will have a longer life. I was reading this passage with Matthew & Blake & I came up with a new paraphrase – You better honor your parents if you want to live long. But in the 10 Commandments, the commandment after honor your father & mother, is thou shalt not kill. I just found a little humor in that. Anne has shared with me, that Ephesians 6 goes on to add, in vs **4** *And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* Children are to obey your parents & in so doing you will learn important lesson. You will avoid dangers & your life will be better.
- 3) **children are also to put God 1st in their lives.** It is important to begin following God early in life. It can add so much to you throughout your life. It will also influence other members of your family

Family together

- 1) play together – importance of time together & leisure
- 2) attend church together
- 3) pray together
- 4) serve together

Individually

- 1) commit to family
- 2) commit to God
- 3) be involved in a Bible Study / small group for support & to share your needs . . .

Conclusion

Joshua stated, “As for me & my family, we will serve the Lord.” I hope you also make the commitment & I hope that you are now better prepared to follow through on it.

That commitment begins on a personal level – accepting Christ. It extends to a couple – putting God first in your relationship. Committing yourself to each other, love, submission, support, communicate. It extends to children: loving them unconditionally, accepting them for who they are – a blessing not a burden, teaching them about God, disciplining them & praising them. It extends from children to parents – respecting them, realize they make mistakes, but trust them & commit to God & to family. The family as a whole should play together, pray together, come to church together & serve God together.

You may want to make a commitment to accept Christ. Commit to family. You may want to come by yourself, with spouse, as a family. . . .