

Home Sweet Home

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INTRODUCTION

“Home” is a wonderful word, communicating various concepts, many of which are close to the heart.

Webster offers the following definitions of home: “(1) one’s place of residence: domicile, house; (2) the social unit formed by a family living together; (3) familiar or usual setting: congenial environment; also: the focus of one’s domestic attention (home is where the heart is); (4) a place of origin (salmon returning to their home to spawn); also: one’s own country (having troubles at home and abroad); (5) an establishment providing residence and care for people with special needs (homes for the elderly or a home for unwed mothers); (6) the objective in various games; especially: home plate” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

In this lesson, let us consider the concept of home from three different standpoints, looking at the benefits and blessings, and also the duties and responsibilities associated with our physical home, our spiritual home, and our eternal home.

OUR PHYSICAL HOME

Our physical homes must be built according to God’s pattern (Psa. 127:1-5).

Psalm 127:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep. 3 Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth. 5 How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

If we follow God’s pattern, we are blessed; if we reject it, we stand accursed (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:3-9; Eph. 5:22-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21).

Genesis 2:18-24 (NASB95) — 18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” 19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man

to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Matthew 19:3-9 (NASB95) — 3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" 4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Ephesians 5:22-33 (NASB95) — 22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

Ephesians 6:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Colossians 3:18-21 (NASB95) — 18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. 20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

OUR SPIRITUAL HOME

Our spiritual home, the church, is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone (Eph. 2:19-22).

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NASB95) — 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

If we follow God's pattern, we are blessed; if we reject it, we stand accursed.

Solomon, the son of David, built a house for God (1 Chron. 22:6-16).

1 Chronicles 22:6-16 (NASB95) — 6 Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the Lord God of Israel. 7 David said to Solomon, "My son, I had intended to build a house to the name of the Lord my God. 8 "But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me. 9 'Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. 10 'He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' 11 "Now, my son, the Lord be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the Lord your God just as He has spoken concerning you. 12 "Only the Lord give you discretion and understanding, and give you charge over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the Lord your God. 13 "Then you will prosper, if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and courageous, do not fear nor be dismayed. 14 "Now behold, with great pains I have prepared for the house of the Lord 100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weight, for they are in great quantity; also timber and stone I have prepared, and you may add to them. 15 "Moreover, there are many workmen with you, stonecutters and masons of stone and carpenters, and all men who are skillful in every kind of work. 16 "Of the gold, the silver and the bronze and the iron there is no limit. Arise and work, and may the Lord be with you."

Near the end of his life, David ordered Solomon to build God's house according to the pattern (1 Chron. 28:9-20).

1 Chronicles 28:9-20 (NASB95) — 9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. 10 "Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be courageous and act." 11 Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch of the temple, its buildings, its storehouses, its upper rooms, its inner rooms and the room for the mercy seat; 12 and the plan of all that he had in mind, for the courts of the house of the Lord, and for all the surrounding rooms, for the storehouses of the house of God and for the storehouses of the dedicated things; 13 also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord and for all the utensils of service in the house of the Lord; 14 for the golden utensils, the weight of gold for all utensils for every kind of service; for the silver utensils, the weight of silver for all utensils for every kind of service; 15 and the weight of gold for the golden lampstands and their golden lamps, with the weight of each lampstand and its lamps; and the weight of silver for the silver lampstands, with the weight of each lampstand and its lamps according to the use of each lampstand; 16 and the gold by weight for the tables of showbread, for each table; and silver for the silver tables; 17 and the forks, the basins, and the pitchers of pure gold; and for the golden bowls with the weight for each bowl; and for the silver bowls with the weight for each bowl; 18 and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the model of the chariot, even the cherubim that spread out their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord. 19 "All this," said David, "the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern." 20 Then David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus promised to build His church and empower the apostles with divine authority (Matt. 16:18-19).

Matthew 16:18-19 (NASB95) — 18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

Beginning on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-47), and continuing thereafter, in times of persecution and peace, the great commission was implemented (Acts 8:1-4; 9:31; 11:19-26; 13:1-3), and God's eternal plan was realized (Heb. 12:22-24).

Acts 2:37-47 (NASB95) — 37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Peter

said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 8:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. 4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

Acts 9:31 (NASB95) — 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Acts 11:19-26 (NASB95) — 19 So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. 22 The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. 23 Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. 25 And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Acts 13:1-3 (NASB95) — 1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of

Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Hebrews 12:22-24 (NASB95) — 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

In the Christian era, we must be active and energetic in spreading the gospel, being careful to build according to the New Testament pattern (1 Cor. 3:5-17).

1 Corinthians 3:5-17 (NASB95) — 5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

As living stones, we are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:4-5).

1 Peter 2:4-5 (NASB95) — 4 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Like Timothy, we must retain the standard of sound words received by inspiration (2 Tim. 1:13-14), continuing in the things we have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom we have learned them (2 Tim. 3:14-16).

2 Timothy 1:13-14 (NASB95) — 13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

2 Timothy 3:14-16 (NASB95) — 14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

OUR ETERNAL HOME

On the night of His betrayal, Jesus said, ““Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going” (John 14:1-4).

John 14:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 “And you know the way where I am going.”

Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you.” The Greek word verb *hetoimazō*, here translated “prepare,” means “to cause to be ready, put/keep in readiness, prepare” [BDAG]. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (Matt. 25:34), glorious beyond compare (1 Cor. 2:9).

Matthew 25:34 (NASB95) — 34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NASB95) — 9 but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Similarly, hell is also a place prepared by God: prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41; cf. Rev. 20:10-15), and for those who are unprepared to meet God (Amos 4:6-13; 1 Thess. 5:2-6).

Matthew 25:41 (NASB95) — 41 “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

Revelation 20:10-15 (NASB95) — 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Amos 4:6-13 (NASB95) — 6 "But I gave you also cleanness of teeth in all your cities And lack of bread in all your places, Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the Lord. 7 "Furthermore, I withheld the rain from you While there were still three months until harvest. Then I would send rain on one city And on another city I would not send rain; One part would be rained on, While the part not rained on would dry up. 8 "So two or three cities would stagger to another city to drink water, But would not be satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the Lord. 9 "I smote you with scorching wind and mildew; And the caterpillar was devouring Your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the Lord. 10 "I sent a plague among you after the manner of Egypt; I slew your young men by the sword along with your captured horses, And I made the stench of your camp rise up in your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the Lord. 11 "I overthrew you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand snatched from a blaze; Yet you have not returned to Me," declares the Lord. 12 "Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel." 13 For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind And declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness And treads on the high places of the earth, The Lord God of hosts is His name.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-6 (NASB95) — 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

CONCLUSION

Let us submit to the Lord's will in every area of our lives (Psa. 37:23-26; Prov. 16:9; Jer. 10:23-24).

Psalm 37:23-26 (NASB95) — 23 The steps of a man are established by the Lord, And He delights in his way. 24 When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the Lord is the One who holds his hand. 25 I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread. 26 All day long he is gracious and lends, And his descendants are a blessing.

Proverbs 16:9 (NASB95) — 9 The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

Jeremiah 10:23-24 (NASB95) — 23 I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. 24 Correct me, O Lord, but with justice; Not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing.

Since heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people, we must be productive in this life if we hope to enjoy rest in the next life (Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:21; Titus 3:1-2, 8, 14).

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NASB95) — 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

2 Timothy 2:21 (NASB95) — 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

Titus 3:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

Titus 3:8 (NASB95) — 8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

Titus 3:14 (NASB95) — 14 Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.