



## **HOMES THAT NEED REPAIR**

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Good morning and welcome to Let the Bible Speak. I hope you had a good week, and I'm glad we're starting a new one by spending a few moments reading and studying the scriptures together. I hope you will plan to visit an assembly of the church of Christ soon. We would be delighted by your presence as we gather to worship and be strengthened by being together, exhorting one another, and learning from the teaching of the word of God. For this half-hour, though, I would like to talk to you about a pressing issue of our time. It is the object of the devil's assault on all that is right and holy. And though incredibly destructive, this attack is insidious and gradual, but it has great consequences for us, our children, the church, and society. In the 127<sup>th</sup> Psalm, verse one, we find these words of warning: "Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it..." The word 'house' can have several applications in scripture. It sometimes refers to the dwelling place of God, whether the physical temple of the Old Testament, or the spiritual dwelling place of God today – the church. It can refer to a person or a family's abode, or it can refer to the family itself. Today, I would like to talk about the latter. The title of the study is: "Homes That Need Repair".

A house can be a beautiful thing to see or live in. But one of the most depressing things to see is a home falling into a state of neglect and disrepair. Purchasing a house is not only the largest financial investment many families will make, but it is also a long-term commitment. How we BUILD a house is very important, but the real work and responsibility come when you must MAINTAIN that structure. It requires diligence to preserve and grow the value of a house and keep it from becoming dilapidated and an eyesore, and a detriment to the community around it. Many fine houses eventually fail because they fall into a state of neglect. Termites, rot, and other destructive forces will go to work on any building that isn't properly cared for. The same is true with the family that lives in that house. A house and a home are two different things. A house is often where a family makes a home. Unfortunately, many families spend more time and money keeping up a house than they do for the home itself. Does your HOME need repair?

According to Pew Research, in 1970, 67 percent of Americans aged 25-49 were living with a spouse and at least one child younger than 18. However, in 2023, that number had dropped to 37 percent. The deterioration of the modern family is evident. In most sectors of society, we have seen the premeditated homicide of the home, and even the church has not escaped the carnage. You seldom attend a church where there is not a case of divorce, or where some kind of domestic trouble does not exist. There are many Christian parents today who are anxious over wayward children who have been swept up into the arms of Satan and carried off into a wicked world. Without a doubt, there are many homes in need of repair today. Is your home what it ought to be? Is your home a place that reflects Christ and glorifies God? Is it a haven of holiness amid a perverse and dark world? Is it strong enough to weather the severe storms that come along, or is your home on shaky ground as we speak today? There are some important inspections that you and I need to make of our homes and make the necessary repairs before it is too late, and it falls apart and is condemned. There are at least three things you need to carefully inspect to see if your home needs repair.

First, many homes are built on a faulty foundation. Any building is only as strong and sure as the foundation it is built upon. You can build a beautiful house, but if its foundation is faulty, the impressive facade will eventually crumble and fall into ruins. The same is true with a family or a home. The Lord was a carpenter by trade and you remember He once taught a house building seminar in Matthew, chapter 7, verses 24-27, saying: "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." Any life that is not built upon a recognition of God and submission to His will is doomed to ultimately fail. The same is true of a family or a home.

What is the condition of your home's foundation? What is your home built upon? Some homes begin simply because of a physical attraction of a man and a woman. That's not enough. Some marriages are the only the result of an emotional connection between a man or a woman. That's not enough either. Some people marry because it's just expected of them, or they marry for financial reasons. Those aren't good enough reasons either. Any home that is built upon a rock is built upon the desire to serve and glorify God through the institution of marriage and the rearing of children, but few people look at it that way. Marriage is not merely a civil institution. It is not a financial arrangement. It's a sacred covenant. Marriage with the first thing God instituted after He created man, and He designed it with a purpose. Genesis 2:18 says, "And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." A helper for what? To tend to God's creation and to do the work that God assigned man to do. Man was placed on this earth to serve and glorify God. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:" (said the preacher in Ecclesiastes 12:13) "Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all." Psalm 100:3 says, "Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture."

The home was the first thing that God furnished mankind with to accomplish His purposes. While we can derive many wonderful benefits from marriage and the home, it is primarily here to ensure that the name of God is transmitted and honored from one generation to the next. When the home fails, then society suffers; the church suffers; the cause of righteousness suffers, and that's why Satan attacks it like he does. Any home that truly succeeds in the eyes of God fulfills its purpose to instill faith from one generation to the next. We've largely forgotten that. Consequently, few homes have an altar of prayer, bible reading, and bible study. In many homes, the name of God is rarely mentioned except when used

as a curse word. In many homes, spiritual things are seldom emphasized if they are recognized at all. The result is that a generation arises that doesn't know the Lord and society grows darker, the church drifts, and many souls are lost. Does Christ Jesus dwell in your house? Is He the unseen and welcomed guest at every meal? Is He welcome in your conversations? Is He recognized as the head of that home? Is yours a home that centers upon Christ and the church? Do spiritual things come first – or do careers, education, money, and pleasure take precedent? When your children grow up and leave home will their most vivid memories be of a home where the love of God was felt and where the presence of Christ was evident? Will they remember being taken to worship and being taught the truths of God's word or was it mostly about earthly pleasures and pursuits? Make Jesus the center of your family. Don't allow recreation, and sports, and the like, to interfere with taking your kids to worship every week. You'll pay a price if you do. If wealth and financial success are emphasized more in your home than laying up eternal treasures in heaven, your home is on the wrong foundation. If your home is more fixed on keeping up with the Joneses than keeping in step with God, your home is on the wrong foundation. And again, I remind you, "unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it."

Second, many homes have a failing structure. They are homes that are not built according to God's blueprint. What is left of the modern family has been reshaped by a changing culture until it barely resembles homes of yesteryear and, more importantly, the ideal that is set forth in the word of God. Friend, if God established the home in the beginning, if it His creation to start with, shouldn't He have the say in what a home is and what it should be like? Shouldn't we be interested in what God says constitutes a home and what makes a home the kind of place it ought to be? First, a home begins with marriage, and God designed that as a lifelong union between one man and one woman. Anything beyond that, even as recorded in later times in the bible, is a corruption of that design. It doesn't matter what you or I think. It doesn't matter what society says. It doesn't matter what the Supreme Court says, because the Supreme Court didn't design the home; God did. In Matthew 19:4-6, referring to the creation in Genesis, said "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,' 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'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate." That's God's plan still today. Marriage is a divine covenant and a sacred union, and a home that is strong and what it ought to be, begins with a marriage that is what God designed it to be. Is your marriage in trouble today? Then your home is in need of repair. The nuclear family is disappearing, and it is becoming increasingly rare for a child to be raised in the same home with their biological father and mother. That's a shame, and it has been detrimental to society.

But then, God gave the home a particular order or arrangement. For example, Paul declared in 1Corinthians 11:3, "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." (and if that's still true, so are the next 13 verses of that chapter) Paul also showed in Ephesians 5:22-25 that this arrangement is modeled after the beautiful relationship between Christ and His bride, the church. He wrote, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Now, before you get angry with Paul and accuse him of belittling and hating women, read the next verse: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her," Verses 28-29, "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church." The husband is the head of the home but that doesn't make him a dictator, nor does it give him the right to disrespect, dishonor, or even abuse his wife. He is to love her with not only same

kind of love he has for himself, but the same kind of love Christ has for His church. He is to sacrifice for her. He must care for her. He is to provide for her. And she is to lovingly submit to his headship or godly leadership. Whenever that design is set aside, trouble is the result. That's what got Adam and Eve in trouble in Genesis, the third chapter, and it continues to contribute to the confusion and chaos in our world today.

But then, go a step further. In the next chapter, Ephesians 6:1-4, and Paul says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU AND YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.'" And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." Now, you can go to all of the workshops and seminars you want to about the home; you can read all of the latest books by supposed marriage and child rearing experts; and you can listen to the commonly accepted wisdom of the day all you want to, but really, all you need to know about having a home that pleases God, blesses society, builds up the church, and prepares people for eternity is in those verses right there! If your home or my home doesn't look like that, it's a home that needs repair. If the dad is delinquent in his duties, that home is suffering. If there is not a nurturing mother in that home who puts the welfare of that home and the needs of her family before all else, that home is not what God intends for it to be. Titus 2:4-5 says that the older women are to "...teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." I didn't write that, the Holy Spirit did. That's God's design.

When you have a home where children are not disciplined and taught obedience and respect, that's a failing home. That's a home in need of repair! For all the good we can say about David, he had a hard time as a father. His home life suffered greatly. He raised some children who were hard to deal with and caused others, including David, a lot of misery. The last of his sons to disappoint him and rebel against him was Adonijah, a handsome young man who was spoiled rotten and felt entitled to whatever he wanted. Do you know what the bible says about him? 1 Kings 1:6 says, "And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, 'Why have you done so?'"... Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him." The problem we have today is that too many parents want to be their child's best friend instead of their parents. And society is consequently plagued with many undisciplined youths who never learned to respect or submit to anyone, and most importantly, God. We have homes in need of repair because they're not built according to God's design.

And then finally, some homes need repair because they are not properly secured. The thief who wants to steal the hearts and lives of you and your children has easy access to your home today. Think of all the things that we allow into our houses today that were unknown to Christian homes a few years ago. In some cases, we have an open sewer in our living room or even in our kids' bedrooms in the form of television and internet. Who and what are you allowing into your home? Do you even know who or what is coming inside? What kind of musical lyrics, what kind of entertainment, what kind of movies with sex, drugs, filthy language, and ungodly lifestyles are we piping into our homes and thus our minds day by day. Do you have strict standards and guard what you and your children are watching and listening to? This world is a wicked place and there are many evil forces and demented people who will do your family and your children great harm if you leave the door open for them. "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners" said Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:33. That's true of your home. Be careful of the influences that are subtly and insidiously creeping into your home. Many of our kids hold a dangerous thing in their hands every day that opens a portal to a wicked and waiting world called a

smartphone and parents who are wise, if we even let them have them, will be diligent to know what they're doing with it and what they're looking at.

You may live in a house today that has some serious problems that you don't recognize. Termites may be eating away, and you won't spot them until the damage is done. Water is seeping in and rotting it away, and you have no idea until the bill is thousands and thousands of dollars. In many cases, that damage could have been prevented if we had been more diligent. How much more important is the condition of our home? Are there problems there that eventually cost the souls of your children and maybe even your own? That's a high price to pay. You need to inspect your home and see if it needs repair and make those repairs before it's too late. A preacher was riding through his neighborhood one day and saw a sign in front a neighbor's house that said, "HOME FOR SALE". He thought to himself, "that sign is wrong. That's a house for sale, not a home." But a day or two later, he learned that the family that lived there was going through a divorce. He shook his head and said to himself, "I guess there was a home for sale after all." And many precious homes are being sold on the auction blocks of sin, selfishness, carelessness, worldliness, because those homes along the way fell into disrepair and ruin if they were built well to begin with. Build your home on Christ Jesus. Build it His way and maintain it carefully and it will bring a lifetime of joy to you and a great blessing to the world around it.

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