

Good Homes

Dee Bowman

We tend to make the simple complex. It makes us look smarter. But that tendency does little to help anyone. It takes longer to wade through even the simplest matters when they have been complicated in some way. On the other hand, the most complex matters are easily dealt with when they have been simplified.

It may be that I am about to introduce the solution to a very complicated problem with a rather simplistic solution, but I don't think so. The problem to which I refer is how to have a good home. Literally hundreds of books have been written in an effort to identify, explain, and solve the problem of how to have good homes. Magazines are full of the same kind of explanations. Television, in its promiscuous and lenient attitudes, even dares broach the subject occasionally. There seems to be a proliferation of information on what needs to be done to restore good homes.

Here is a simple solution:

A good home must have a Christ-like atmosphere. I don't care how much psychology you know or how many seminars you have been to on how to have a good home, until Christ's teachings and examples are in your home, it will not be what it should (compare Phil. 2:5-12; Col. 3:17-19).

Christ was humble. Humility will help nearly any home. Christ was dedicated. Dedication is necessary for a family to function like it ought. Christ had a servant's attitude. When that same attitude is in the home, everyone benefits. Christ looked after the welfare of others before his own. Imagine what that would do for homes around the country. Christ practiced a sacrificial love. Need I say more?

A good home must have interested parents. Simple, huh? But neglected.

For one thing, there must be a noticeable father involvement if there is to be a good home. Paul said, "...fathers provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). When the father figure is missing, serious consequences result. Oh, they may not be felt this week, or even this month, but they will come.

Parents show their interest not only by providing an education and social skills for their children, but by providing discipline as well. Next to spiritual instruction, discipline may be the most neglected thing in most homes today. Another possible exception is the simple lack of the presence of parents at home. Lots of parents can't do anything for their children because they're not there. Discipline, while it may well be one of the most

difficult assignments for parents, is also one of the most noticeable signs of interest. It shows them you care (Heb. 12:6-11). Without it, they flounder with neither location nor guidance. With it comes confidence, trust, and a sense of location.

A good home must have respectful children. It's sad to me to see how respect for the aged has eroded in this generation. I'm not sure how that has happened, except that we are all immersed in the idea--promoted with great effectivity by television--that young is beautiful and old is ugly. Among most young people today wisdom is not revered as much as is talent, profits are more important than rules, how a man looks is more valuable than what he is on the inside, his character.

I confess that I'm much more able to identify the problem than to suggest what should be done about it. It's hard to get a 16-year old to do much about respect, I know that. It has to begin somewhere back of that. Say at about 2 months, it seems to me. In fairness to young people, respect is something that is best if it is earned, not merely commanded. It's best when it comes of a youngster's observations of an honest and dedicated Christian character.

Respectful children bring something to a home that the finest draperies, the best sound equipment, the latest interior designs cannot. Respectful children bring dignity to a home. They bring honor. They may even shock the visitors with their courtesy and civility.

A good home will have the Bible in it. Not just on the coffee table, but in the hearts of the family members.

A good home will be a reflection of Bible principles. Family members will know that any decision made will be influenced by a knowledge of the Bible. They will regard it as the main influence on how they treat one another and how they regard those who visit with them. The beatitudes will be more than something they read in Bible class. They will form attitudes for family functions. The Christian graces will not be words they memorized to get a star on their attendance chart at class, but principles to be translated into a way of living life. And preaching will not be a ritual which merely requires attendance on Sunday morning, but a way of learning how to become a better person.

Few things are more impressive or more personally enjoyable than a good home, especially one with God in it. How's yours?