

Making a Home Happy

by Ellen G. White



God designs the family to be a symbol of the great family in heaven. In the home the foundation is laid for the prosperity of the church. The influences that rule in the home life are carried into the church life; therefore, church duties should first begin in the home.

The home is to be regarded as a sacred place. Those who are united by the ties of nature have the strongest claims upon one another. In their dealings with each other they should manifest kindness and the tenderest love. The words spoken and the deeds performed should be in accordance with Christian principles. Every word should be guarded; for we are responsible to God to represent in our lives the character of Christ. The cross is to be borne daily. Every day we should surrender ourselves to God. Thus we may gain special help and daily victories. In this way the home may become a school, where workers for Christ may be trained.

But too often the duties of the home life, the duties of husband and wife, brother and sister, parent and child, are misunderstood. By our words and deportment in the home we can degrade our religion. By manifesting a wrong spirit, we can misrepresent the principles which should rule the life. The members of a family should manifest honesty, candor, frankness, forbearance, and tenderness toward one another. By speaking encouraging words each should seek to help the other.

Such words often exert an influence that makes reproof unnecessary. Look upon matters in a cheerful light, seeking to lift the shadows that, if cherished, will envelop the soul. Cultivate sympathy for others. Let cheerfulness, kindness, and love pervade the home. This will increase a love for religious exercises, and duties large and small will be performed with a light heart.

Every one who names the name of Christ has pledged himself to represent his Master in character. He is under pledge to Christ to do his best; for provision has been made that divine grace shall so work that the characters of men and women may be moulded after the similitude of the character of Christ. To those who receive Him, Christ gives power to become the sons of God. Jesus is to be uplifted, talked of, thought of. When He dwells in the heart, family worship will not be a form of dry, set phrases. The heart will be imbued with love for the Saviour, and this love will be expressed in praise and prayer. Dark words of hopelessness and discouragement will not be heard.

Religion is to be cherished in the home life. The members of the family are to show that they are in possession of a power received from Christ. They are to improve in every habit and practice, thus showing that they realize constantly that to be a Christian

means nothing less than conformity to the character of Christ.

They are to show by a good example that they have that faith which works by love and purifies the soul, making the character true and undefiled, until by growth in grace the natural bent of the thoughts and feelings is heavenward.

The right principles followed daily, hourly, in the home, bring Jesus very near, and where He is, there is light and peace and joy. What are the conditions of Christ's indwelling presence?—"If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (John 15:10). "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

Precious charge, given to every believer! A Christlike influence surrounds him who has given himself to the Lord. He feels that he is under obligation to serve God, and he manifests a love that makes all duties pleasant. But if Christians allow themselves to be selfish, they become impatient, petulant, harsh. Satan takes the lines into his own hands, and controls them. They speak and act without regard to the influence they exert on others. They do not stop to think that the enemy is using them to bring confusion, sadness, and discouragement into the home. Their thoughts are unsanctified and unholy; for God is forgotten. Yet some who act thus are professedly servants of Christ. They think they have a great duty to perform, but it is outside the home. They have no time to do missionary work at home; but they are anxious to work for sinners afar off. A desire for outward effect controls their thoughts and actions.



Missionary work is to be done in the home. Here those who have received Christ are to show what grace has done for them. A divine influence controls the true believer in Christ, and this influence makes itself felt throughout the home, and is favorable for the perfection of the characters of all in the home.

The faithful performance of home duties has an influence upon those not in the home. Our spiritual progress in the home is carried into our missionary work abroad. In the father's house is to be given the evidence of a fitness to work for the church. With earnest, humble hearts the members of the family are to seek to know that Christ is abiding in the heart. Then they can go forth fully armed and equipped for service.

The reason why there are so many decided failures in missionary lines is that self is not under God's discipline, but is wrestling for recognition. Any one could take up the work, as some professed missionaries do, making short visits to this one and that one, talking of the mistakes others have made, and giving the impression that the speaker has wisdom which enables him to shun such weakness. But this kind of work places human ability in the control of a power from beneath. Let souls fear for themselves and for others. Let missionaries have a living experience in spiritual conflict. Envy, love of the supremacy, evil-speaking, self-gratification, are altogether too common among professed Christians. No one can be a laborer together with God, and yet manifest a desire for the highest place.

“Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth); proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:8-10). If this instruction had been followed, there would today be more men with well-balanced minds, men fit to be “laborers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:9).

By practising self-denial in the home, we are fitted to work for others. The effort to make the home what it should be—a symbol of the home in heaven—prepares us for work in a larger sphere. The education received by showing a tender regard for each other, enables us to know how to reach hearts that need to be taught the principles of true religion. The church needs all the cultivated spiritual force which can be obtained, that all, and especially the younger members of the Lord’s family may be carefully guarded. The truth lived at home makes itself felt in disinterested labor abroad. He who lives Christianity in the home will be a bright and shining light everywhere.



Home duties should be performed with the consciousness that if they are done in the right spirit, they give an experience that will enable us to work for Christ in the most permanent and thorough manner. O, what might not a living Christian do in missionary lines by performing faithfully the daily duties, cheerfully lifting the cross, not neglecting any work, however disagreeable to the natural feelings! In the Christian household,

where God is feared, where God is loved, where God is worshiped, where faithfulness has become second nature, where a haphazard, careless inattention to duties is not permitted, where quiet communion with God is looked upon as essential to the faithful performance of these duties, ministers are best prepared for work abroad.

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