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Turning Our Hearts Toward Home

MALACHI 4:4-6

Introduction

1. How often have we heard the phrases . . .
 - a. "There's no place like home" or
 - b. "Home is where the heart is"
2. Hopefully, for many of you, the word "home" brings back fond and cherished memories of . . .
 - a. Special times involving your father, your mother and various siblings.
 - b. Meals together as a family, games, smiles and laughter.
3. Sadly, it may be for others of you here today thoughts of home are painful, because they remind you of . . .
 - a. Parents who were constantly fighting or too busy for you and your siblings.
 - b. Children who rebelled and eventually left home never to back.
4. The passage read for us this morning are the last words of the Old Testament.
 - a. In them the prophet Malachi points to the ministry of John the Baptist.
 - b. An angel of the Lord disclosed to Zacharias that a child would be born to him and Elizabeth, a child to whom they would give the name John.
 - d. You and I better know him as John the Baptist.

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- c. The angel referenced this passage in Malachi and said that John would "go before Him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'" (Luke 1:17,

NASB95)

5. This would be a part of John the Baptist's message and ministry, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and children to their parents.
6. This morning I would like for us to think about why it is so important for us to turn our hearts toward our homes.

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In The Home, Our Children Learn . . .

A. AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION

1. Of the ten commandments which God gave to His people at Mount Sinai,
 - a. The first four focus upon our relationship with God
 - b. The last six deal with our relationships with others.
2. The first of the last six specifically looks at our responsibility toward our parents.

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.” (Exodus 20:12, NASB95)

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you.” (Deuteronomy 5:16, NASB95)

3. The key component of this command, “Honor your father and your mother,” is repeated twice again in the Pentateuch (Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 27:16).

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- a. Positively

“Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 19:3,

NASB95)

b. Negatively

“‘Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’” (Deuteronomy 27:16, NASB95)

4. Five times we find it in the gospels (Matthew 15:4; 19:19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; Luke 18:20)
 - a. Two of these (Matthew 15:1-6; Mark 7:5-13) are the account of Jesus’ response to a question put to him by the Pharisees and scribes who had come out from Jerusalem.
 - b. They had seen Jesus’ disciples eating without having ceremonially washed their hands.
 - c. Jesus turned their question around on them and accused them of neglecting the commandment of God while holding to a tradition which men had established.
 - d. He took them back to the sixth commandment, “Honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) and pulled in something else which the law had stipulated.
 - e. “He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death” (Matthew 15:4; Mark 7:10; cf. Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9).
 - f. Jesus then confronted these religious leaders with their own mistreatment of their parents.

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“But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,” he is not to honor his father or his mother.’ And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.” (Matthew 15:5–6, NASB95)

5. Once in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:2-3)

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“Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.” (Ephesians 6:2–3, NASB95)

6. Where do children learn respect for authority?
7. Is it not in the home? Is it not from their fathers and their mothers?
8. I realize there are those fathers who, as the apostle Paul wrote, “provoke” their children “to anger” (Ephesians 6:4) or “exasperate, embitter” them so that they “become discouraged” (Colossians 3:21).
9. But I do not believe this is true of godly fathers and mothers.
10. You, as parents, realize that if your children do not develop a healthy respect for authority they will have a difficult time throughout their lives.
11. They learn to respect and submit to the authority of their teachers, their employers and various civil authorities they will encounter throughout their lives.
12. Those children who do not learn these lessons at home when they are young will find themselves struggling throughout their lives.
13. Their rebellion may even lead to a shortened life, something which none of us as parents want for our children.
14. One other thing I might add. Many of you young ladies will one day seek a husband.
15. Pay attention to the way that young man’s mother treats her father because typically this will be the way she will treat you.
16. To the Christian wives in Ephesus, the apostle Paul wrote, “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22).
17. Likewise, you young men, pay attention to the way that young lady’s mother treats her father because this is likely the way she will treat you.

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B. LOVE AND LOYALTY

1. Where do children learn what love for and loyalty to another human being

looks like.

- a. Sadly, it is not typically found in our public school system.
 - b. Neither will our children learn it from the various “family” shows they may choose to watch on television.
 - c. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Tik-tok will not teach it to them.
 - d. These are artificial snapshots and do not present a true picture of day-to-day life in the home.
2. Again, the best environment in which these traits can be taught and acquired is our home.
 3. Men, our sons learn what it means to love their future wives by watching the love you demonstrate each day toward their mother.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,” (Ephesians 5:25, NASB95)

“So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,” (Ephesians 5:28–29, NASB95)

4. Our daughters learn from this same love the kind of young man they should seek as their future mate.
5. Young ladies, please know that the way this young man treats his mother is the way he will ultimately treat you.

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6. Mothers, according to the apostle Paul, one of your many responsibilities in your home is to teach your daughters to “love their husbands” and “their children” (Titus 2:4).
7. Not only is love learned in the home, so is loyalty.
8. It is by watching us as parents that our children learn the meaning of loyalty to another human being.
9. Those of us who grew up in a home where our parents were loyal to one another and loyal to their responsibilities were blessed.

10. We had godly examples to follow.
11. Let's do our best as parents and grandparents to maintain that same loyalty in our own marriages.

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1. The last two traits I would like for us to consider in our focus upon our homes are those traits of obedience and trust.
2. We often sing "trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.
3. You and I obey God, not only because He is sovereign over all His creation, but also because He is trustworthy.
 - a. Long ago, God spoke to His people through his prophet Jeremiah and reminded them of what He had commanded them,

"Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you." (Jeremiah 7:23b, NASB95)
 - b. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus "became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9b, NASB95).
4. It was Solomon in Proverbs 3:5-6, who wrote, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."
5. In the early days of the church when Peter and the apostles were commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus, they said, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

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6. Paul instructed the children in the church in Ephesus, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1).

7. Parents, we must make it our goal to obey God first of all.
8. Children, when your parents are teaching you to follow God and do His will, listen to them and obey them because they are teaching you what is best for your life.
9. It is the right thing for you to do.

Conclusion

1. Our focus this morning has been on the home as God designed it.
2. It is in the home that our children are to learn what it means to become godly adults.
3. God has placed that responsibility upon those of us who are parents.
4. Let us seek his guidance and blessing as we seek to accomplish this task.
5. There is another home which each of us should for which each of us should long.
6. It is that home which is “eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1) where we will be “at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8).
7. It is to this home that I pray you have turned your heart.
8. If you are not prepared for the eternal home which God intends for those who are His, will you not repent of your sin and come to our Lord in obedient faith?
9. Today, let Him wash away your sins so that God may adopt you into His eternal family.