# Home - Part 1

Protect Your Priorities

(Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. We’re starting a brand-new four-part message series called HOME and I am really excited about what God is going to do with this series because I don’t know if any of you’ve noticed, but there are homes that are falling apart all over the place. Now for some people this is just the new normal, but I believe that God has something so much better for us.  And so, we’re going to invest in the lives of those who one day will be married, who will have their own homes and children. You see, this is so important, because I don’t want to hear any of you say, “I wish I’d known that,” when it’s too late.

For those of you who are parents, those of you on the front lines, how many of you would agree that parenting and keeping a home can be very difficult?

What I want to do is to spend a little time laying the foundation, so that in the years to come, or maybe you’re there right now, you will be able to effectively protect your priorities. In this series, I want to invest in the lives of those who one day will be married, so that they will be equipped with spiritual truth that will help them prepare for a HOME that would honor God. And then we’re also going to speak directly into marriages to strengthen them to become everything that God would want them to become.

It’s interesting how our expectations of what we hope marriage will be like sometimes falls way short of what it actually is. And as you look around at your friends, your neighbors, and your family you have got to admit that so many marriages just are not working. The thing that’s really scary if you’re considering marriage, or if you are married, is that depending on what article, survey, or study you read, somewhere around 50% of marriages don’t make it. That’s crazy, because if this was any other area of your life you would do anything that you could to study, prepare, and protect yourself.

If there was a 50% chance that you were going to get killed in an automobile accident on your way to church today, I wonder how many of you would’ve put on a helmet before you got in the car, maybe double checked your seatbelts, and been extremely cautious on your route to the church. You would have made sure that you were ready. And yet, statistically it appears that the reason so many marriages are struggling is that most couples are not spiritually prepared to live in a marriage relationship and in a home that honors God. And so, that’s why we’re going to invest into the lives of the people that God loves so much to help prepare our homes in a way that would honor God and go the distance.

As we begin this series we’re going to look at how to protect our priorities. I believe that a lot of the difficulties we face in our homes is simply because our priorities are all mixed up. A lot of us have grown up with this false perception of what it really means to be fulfilled in life. And I don’t know whether we get this from Disney movies or what, but we grow up thinking that to be really happy in life we have to find that one special person. If we’re going to protect our priorities, we first need to get our priorities in the right place. If we’re going to get our homes in order, then you need to make sure that your number one priority, your first priority, is to love the Lord your God.

## 1. Love the Lord your God

The thing that’s really amazing is that the Bible has been telling us this for thousands of years and yet the message we hear, that we’ve received from the world, is that we need to find that one person to be happy and fulfilled. But the Bible tells us in Deuteronomy chapter 6 that God is your number one priority and therefore your spouse is your number two. Verse four says,

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

Even Jesus repeated this when someone asked him “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” He replied, “Above anything else, make God number one”. In Mark chapter 12 he said:

“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:28-31).

And so, Jesus said, that God is first and people come next. This must be our priority, and for those of you who are married, to really have a marriage that honors God, you’ve got to put God first in your relationship and your spouse must be number two.

Now, the Bible says to love the Lord your God with how much of your heart? Would you help me out? Say it out loud with me, “Love the Lord your God with ALL your heart”. Notice, it doesn’t say with some, or with a little bit, but we are told to love God with all of our heart.

Wouldn’t you agree though, that many, if not most of us, love God with a little bit of our hearts? Don’t we divide it up? Some for our spouse or significant other, some for our children and friends, some for our pets, maybe our job, our car, our electronics, or whatever. And so, what happens is that our lives begin to revolve around the busyness of our work, school, media, and our social lives instead of revolving around God. Maybe it used to be that you were on fire for God, but now you’re too busy coaching Little League, taking your daughter to dance class, and you’re just going, going, going and going. Just too busy for God!

Yet the priority is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart. And I don’t want any of you to kid yourself so I’ve got to ask you, “How important is your involvement in church?”  Not your attendance, but your involvement as a participant in the body of Christ. Involvement, that knows that there’s a biblical function for you to do in church, you’re immersed in a biblical community, you’re plugged in and you’re a contributing part of the family of God. You see, to love the Lord your God with all of your heart means not only in our words, but in our actions. And so, the best thing that we can do for our homes, our children, and our community is to love God with all of our hearts, because God is number one. God is our first priority and our spouse is our second.

## 2. Love Your Spouse

Now, for those of you that are not married, those of you that one-day hope to be married, I want to encourage you to seek the one, to seek God, while you’re preparing for your number two. Protect your priorities, and maybe I could give you this advice. Well, it’s actually Andy Stanley who said this, “Become the person you're looking for…is looking for.” In other words, you seek the one, you live for God, you live your life devoted to God, because he’s your Lord, he’s King of your life, and he’s preparing you for that someone whom you can serve him with. You seek the one while he prepares you for your two. Those of you that are married, protect your priorities, make God first and your spouse second. You see, the Bible tells us in Genesis chapter 2:

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

What this tells us is that when you’re growing up your primary relationship is mom and dad.  As they raise you, they point you to God as your primary relationship, he is your priority.  But when you get married that secondary priority shifts from your parents to your spouse.      The problem we run into so often in our culture today is that we believe you have to meet your number one to be fulfilled. And when you believe your spouse is your number one, your expectations are unrealistic, because they were never intended to be in that place, and God is to be your number one priority. God is number one, not your spouse, but together you and your spouse can more effectively serve God.

Today many of our homes are a wreck, because we’re not living according to God’s ordained priorities. And it begins early, you know, when you make your girlfriend your priority, or your boyfriend your priority. Or maybe when you get married you’re still the priority, but when the kids come along suddenly the kids become the priority. Now, dad gets jealous, he’s left out, and so he starts to pour himself into work, mom pours herself into the kids and what happens to their relationship? Their relationship crumbles. The home is no longer what it’s supposed to be, there’s no longer the emphasis on God and family, with God being number one, and your spouse being number two. And so, when those priorities are out of order, the home can never be what God intended it to be, because you’re not living according to the God ordained priorities.

And I just want to say one thing, it’s not always the bad things that destroy homes, it’s often good things that are out of place, and so you need to protect your priorities. Those of you who are going to get married in the future, I want you to embrace this today, seek your one while you’re preparing for your two. If you’re married and you’re struggling in any way I can almost guarantee you that your priorities are off and you’re not putting God first.

And so, today if you want to get your home in order seek God first. If you want your marriage to grow, seek God first every day.  Pray together, be centered around God’s word, and serve Jesus in his church together. Put God first and then make sure you come together and your relationship with each other is second only to God. And then number three, as you protect your priorities, lead your family.

## 3. Lead your Family

As your hearts are fully surrendered to Christ, those of you who are parents come together and you lead your family intentionally. You’re not so concerned about meeting your child’s every desire as you are about leading them in pursuit of God. The Bible calls this training and there’s a very well-known passage in Proverbs that says,

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

In other words, we urge, we prompt, we initiate, and we lead our children in the way that they should go. We initiate a hunger for…

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).

We train them in the way they should go, because our role is to transfer dependence. We lead them to the point where they no longer depend on us, but now they depend on God, and we do that by loving God, seeking to live godly lives, as we intentionally lead our families. It’s not something that just happens, and I promise you that if you let it happen you’ll kiss your kids goodbye, you’ll send them off to college, you’ll walk them down the aisle, and you’re going to wonder where you went wrong?

This morning, can you honestly say that you’re leading your children or in your home are your children leading you? You see, the Bible is very clear, God’s purpose is for you to lead them spiritually, for you to set the tone for your home, you’re the divine authority in the household and therefore you must lead intentionally. God tells us in Deuteronomy chapter 6,

“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.  Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.  Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.  Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

“Impress them on your children” verse seven tells us, meaning that we talk about the commandments of God. We lead our families spiritually. It’s not just something we do on the weekend on the way home from church or Unashamed Youth, but it becomes an integral part of each day of the week. It’s really countercultural, because when the world goes one way, we don’t go that way, but we’re mindful of Jesus warning in Matthew chapter 7,

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

And so, we want to expose our children to the great truths of God, to impress upon them his plan to prosper them, to give them a hope and a future. We want them to know his presence, his goodness, and the power of prayer. We want them to receive the truth of his Word and the infilling of his Spirit that will empower them, lead them, guide them, and teach them. Therefore, we protect our priorities, leading our family, because we want to transfer their dependence from us, not to their friends or themselves, but we want to teach them to depend completely on God. We do that by leading and loving God with all of our hearts.

One of the best ways that you can be a blessing to your children is to prioritize and strengthen your marriage. Too many people fail to recognize that their children are a temporary assignment. They’ve been entrusted to you for maybe 19 or 20 years, they’re a temporary assignment, but your marriage is until death do you part. It's not until you’re not happy anymore, something better comes along, or they’re not meeting your needs; it's until death do we part. Marriage is a covenant, a permanent God-honoring commitment and that's why we have to prioritize it even above the children. That doesn't mean that we don't feed them or give them baths, but you honor the marriage in all that you do. If you want your home to be blessed, show the world what a God-honoring marriage looks like. You protect your priorities!

Now in closing, I want to acknowledge for a moment that I understand there are so many hurting relationships right now, there are broken homes, and I hurt with those that are hurting. My heart breaks for those families, those children involved, and yet what we’re talking about today is really simple but it’s not easy. To protect your priorities, number one love the Lord your God, number two love your spouse, and number three lead your family; it sounds simple, but we can’t just say it, we’ve got to do it. We’ve got to put God first, we’ve got to keep God first, and we’ve got to pray, because everything in society is attempting to remove God, to remove history, and to destroy the traditional home.

We’ve got to protect our priorities no matter what. God is first, we’re people of his Word, we are his Church, we’re seeking to live out his Word and we’re letting the Holy Spirit live through us. But it’s not easy, we’ve got to work harder than ever because there are so many obstacles to faith. And so, we bring our families to church, we serve, and we’re modeling this for our kids and our neighbors. We protect our priorities, because you can never be fulfilled in life until you finally meet the One. Until you know the Lord as your One you’ll never find true lasting satisfaction in life. For,

“The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

If we start there, the foundation will be laid for a home that will truly honor God and that is worth building a life on.

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