

**“Christian Fortitude in Family Worship”, Session # 29 on the 2nd Commandment,
Presented by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 23rd, 2014,
in the Adult Sunday School.**

How can we begin Family devotions in our home if we have never done it before? I believe that every head of a household should pray for grace, and the fortitude of spirit to take the steps necessary to begin and continue this God-honoring practice.

John Gill says, “Though saints are to be humble, self-denying, submissive to the will of God and patient towards all men, and in all things; yet they are not to indulge to pusillanimity, or to a meanness of spirit; but to show firmness of mind, resolution, and an undaunted courage, and fortitude of soul, a manly spirit, which is not at all unbecoming the Christian.” To be pusillanimous is to be cowardly or timid. He says: “Christian fortitude is concerned about things which are apparently the will of God, and is exercised in obedience to it; for the sake of a man’s doing his duty, and with a pure view to the honor and glory of God; trusting in and depending upon His power, strength and grace, to him through whatever he is called to do or suffer in the performance of it; and from which he is not to be deterred by any difficulties that occur, or dangers he may be exposed unto therein: this is fortitude becoming Christians.” Gill further shows wherein this fortitude of mind consists, and whereby it shows itself. It shows itself, he says – “First of all in religious exercises, especially in those religious exercises which take place in Family Worship.” (End of quote) Fathers, he is referring to your leading your family in reading the Bible, praying, and praising the Lord in song. But let us ask ourselves the question for our study this morning: How will your loved ones be persuaded that family worship is desirable and that it will be for the good of the whole family? The answer to that is that you yourself have to convince them by the way that you conduct family worship. If you have experienced the great benefits and blessings of private worship, you will now see the desirability of family worship. You will have seen what the saints of old did in conducting family worship, and you want to begin to lead your whole family into what you yourself are persuaded will be for the good of the whole family. What is family worship? Let me give you 3 things which family worship is and does.

I. Setting up Family Worship will establish a testimony for God in your family.

Turn with me over to Psalm 78: 1 – “Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.” “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.” “We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” “For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; and may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation that did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God.”

A testimony is a declaration of truth or fact; in this case a declaration of the truth and reality of God. A great part of family worship is conveying on to your wife and children the importance of praising the Lord for His wonderful works; of passing on to the next generation the truth of the Lord’s strength to save the soul, His ability to provide for their every need, His ability to give sure comfort and everlasting hope to each person who will trust in Him. One of your greatest goals in family worship will be your so leading and teaching your wife and children the truth of the Scriptures, that they will continually be fixing their hope upon God, and not forgetting His

wondrous works, but rather exercising faith in Him and learning to keep His commandments. Family worship is the setting for these good things to be learned.

II. Family Worship is the father tenderly but firmly encouraging all the members of his family to serve the Lord -

Look with me now at 2nd Timothy 1, verse 2 – “ To Timothy a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” “I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Loris and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” “For God has not given us a spirit of fear (a spirit of timidity, it reads in the NAS), but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

Notice how Paul tenderly but firmly addresses Timothy concerning what God has called him to do, both in his private life, and in his ministry as an evangelist. He calls him, “a beloved son”. He was not his actual son; he was his spiritual son. Paul knew that Timothy had a very sincere faith; he wanted to learn all that he could from the Apostle Paul. And yet we find implied in these words the fact that Timothy was not all that confident in himself, about what he could do and accomplish for the Lord. Such may some of you men be, in regard to starting or maintaining family worship. But we see here that Paul was mindful of Timothy’s tears in this regard, in regard to his own inadequacy, and so he exhorts him in these verses and in chapter 2, verse 1 to be “strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus”. Paul was a good example for Timothy to follow in this regard. Even though Paul was a single man and did not have a family with which he could have family devotions, he tells Timothy that he prayed for him night and day, that he greatly desired to see him, and that he calls to remembrance his genuine faith that was in him. These are the things which you, by faith, should attempt to see to become characteristic of you as a father and as a husband. Do you greatly desire to see your wife and children, and to pray with them in the evening after dinner or before you all go to bed? Do you understand that you should be attempting to teach them to pray and to worship in order that they too might honor God, and give Him praise and thanksgiving for the many wonderful works that He has done for you? Paul reminds Timothy of the great blessing it was to him to have had a godly grandmother, Lois, and a godly mother, Eunice who no doubt prayed with him and for him and taught him many good things about Christ, and grace, and other wonderful truths of the Holy Scriptures. Even so, in order for our efforts at establishing family worship to be really successful, we as the heads of households are going to have to become men of private prayer, and men who greatly desire to be an encouragement to our wife and family members in teaching them what it means to worship God as a family. There is a great blessing in family worship.

Timothy, at various points in his ministry was going to have to take the part of a father with his children. This is what you men who have children are called to do in your own household. In fact, Paul says to the Thessalonian believers, over in 1st Thessalonians 2: 10 – “You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” You can see here from these verses what you as a father are called to do; to exhort and comfort and even to charge your children to receive the truth of the word of God and live it out by faith in God and our Lord Jesus Christ. What is the best setting for the imparting of the truth of the Bible, and learning to praise and worship God. It is when the Father takes the lead and commits himself to

family worship. A few simple guidelines for family worship. Gather all of the family together. Let no one make an excuse why they cannot be there. Sometimes at the end of an evening meal is the easiest time. The Father can take up the Bible and read a small portion of Scripture; not more than chapter, and certainly it could be just a few verses. If he can make a few comments upon the Scripture and what it is saying and make a few applications to the family in general, this would be good. If he does not think that he is able to do this, he could read Matthew Henry on the passage, or some other commentator, and then following this, he would lead the family in prayer, and close the time with a hymn or a psalm. This whole time need not be any longer than 15 minutes to half an hour. But in this God is honored, and the family has honored Him together.

III. Family Worship is the entire family making their boast in the Lord.

Turn with me over to Psalm 34, verses 1-5 – “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” “My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad.” “Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.” “I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” “They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed.”

Family worship is the time for the father in the family to lead in making his boast in the Lord. He should be able to relate to the rest of the family times when He prayed and the Lord answered him, and helped him, and delivered him from all his fears. As a father is often relating God as His strength, and song, and help in the various situations of life, the children will hear this and the parents can pray that the children will come by faith in Christ, to know that this God is their God. As they put their trust in their father’s God, they will over time also learn to pray. They will learn to express the same confidence as their father, that God will bless them and help them to do everything that they do to His glory. Exodus 15: 2 – “The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; His is my God, and I will praise Him; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.”

How do you teach this to your children? You let them see your godly example. Let me ask you, dear fathers, are you learning the holy discipline of praying day and night? Are you beginning to learn what it means to pray without ceasing, and in everything you thanks, for this is the will of God for you, in Christ Jesus? Are you learning to “bless the Lord at all times, and His praise is continually in your mouth? Does your soul make its boast in the Lord? And do the humble, that is your wife and your children (in this study), hear of it, and they rejoice. Do you encourage them to magnify the Lord with you, and ask them to exalt the Lord together with you?

Proverbs 3: 33 – “The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the just.”

In closing let me relate to what Dr. Joel Beeke has said about his parents and what it meant for he and his brother to have been in on these times of their family’s devotions. He says: “When my parents commemorated their fiftieth anniversary, all five of us children decided to express thanks to our father and mother for one thing without consulting each other.” “Remarkably, all five of us thanked our mother for her prayers and all five of us thanked our father for his leadership of our Sunday evening family worship.” “My brother said, ‘Dad, the oldest memory I have is of tears streaming down your face as you taught us from Pilgrim’s Progress on Sunday evening how the Holy Spirit leads believers.’” “At the age of three God used you in family worship to convict me that Christianity was real.” “No matter how far I went astray in later years, I could never seriously question the reality of Christianity, and I want to thank you for that.”