

The Christian Home

Lesson 12: The Household of Faith: The Church as the Family of God -- 1

Timothy 3:14–15; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19

We have come a long way together. We began in a garden, where God said it was not good for the man to be alone and gave the world the gift of marriage. We have walked through the calling of husbands and wives, the permanence of the covenant, the blessing of children, the hard work of raising and disciplining them, the honoring of parents young and old, and the dignity of every household, married and single, full and grieving. We have stood at the front door and opened it wide in hospitality. And now, in this last lesson, we arrive at the home behind all the homes, the family that holds every other family, the household of God.

Because here is the truth the whole study has been building toward: the deepest family you belong to is not the one whose name you carry or whose photos hang on your wall. It is the family of God. When Paul wrote to Timothy about how Christians should live, he called the church “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.” Not a building. Not a club you join or an event you attend on Sundays. A household. A family. The family of the living God, with God Himself as Father, Christ as elder brother, and every believer as a true brother or sister to every other.

And this family has a door anyone can come through. To the Ephesians, many of whom had once been outsiders with no claim on the promises of God, Paul wrote some of the most wonderful words in all of Scripture: “you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” No longer strangers. No longer on the outside looking in. Brought near, by the blood of Christ, and made family. Every Christian, whatever their earthly home has been, is born into this household and given a name and a place at the Father’s table.

This is good news for everyone, but it is especially good news for anyone whose earthly family has failed them or is missing altogether, the orphan, the widow, the single believer, the one estranged from kin, the one whose home is full of sorrow. You have a family. It is the church of the living God, and it is meant to be the truest home you have ever known. As we close this study, we lift our eyes from the homes we build for a few decades to the home that lasts forever. Read these verses slowly, and see the family into which the gospel has brought you, and which will still be your family when every earthly house has turned to dust.

Group Discussion: We often think of the church as a place we go or an organization we belong to, rather than a family we are part of. Scripture calls it ‘the household of God,’ the family of the living God. How would the way we relate to one another change if we genuinely treated our congregation as our family, and not merely as a weekly gathering?

Personal Reflection: Think about how you actually relate to the church, your local congregation. Is it, in practice, a family you belong to and invest in, or more like an event you attend? Where might God be calling you to take your place in His household more fully, whether by drawing near, contributing, or caring for others in it?

Read 1 Timothy 3:14–15; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19

Study Questions

1. Paul tells Timothy he is writing so that people will ‘know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth’ (1 Timothy 3:14–15). What does it mean that the church is the ‘household’ or family of God, and what weight is added by calling it ‘the church of the living God’ and ‘a pillar and buttress of the truth’?
2. If the church is genuinely a family and not merely a weekly gathering, that should shape how we treat it. Do you relate to your congregation more like a family member (committed, invested, present in good times and bad) or more like a spectator who attends an event? Where is God calling you to belong more fully?
3. To the Ephesians, who had once been outsiders, Paul writes, “you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). According to the New Testament, how does a person move from being a ‘stranger’ to a ‘member’ of God’s household, and what does it mean to be brought near and made family through Christ?
4. Becoming part of God’s family is not automatic; it comes through responding to the gospel and being born into His household. Have you truly entered this family, through faith in Jesus, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ, and are you living as one who has been brought near? If you have, how does remembering that you were once a ‘stranger’ shape your gratitude and your welcome of others?
5. Paul’s whole purpose in writing was so that Christians would ‘know how one ought to behave in the household of God’ (1 Timothy 3:15). Why does it matter that there is a right way to live and order ourselves within God’s family, and what does it tell us that God cares not only that we belong to the church but how we conduct ourselves in it?
6. In a healthy family, everyone contributes; no one is merely served. Honestly, are you more of a consumer in the church family (receiving, attending, evaluating) or a contributor (serving, giving, building up others)? What is one specific way you could take greater ownership of your place in God’s household?
7. Paul writes, “As we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). Why does Paul direct us to do good to ‘everyone’ and yet give a special priority to fellow believers, and what does this teach about the mutual care God expects within His family?

8. Doing good 'to the household of faith' becomes real only with specific people. Who in your church family is God placing on your heart right now, someone to encourage, carry, include, or serve? What is one concrete way you could do good to them this week?
9. This study has moved through marriage, children, parents, singleness, and the open home, and now it arrives here: the church as the family of God, the household into which every Christian is born and which outlasts every earthly home. How does the household of God gather up and surpass all the earthly households we have studied, so that even those without spouse, children, or a happy home of their own have a true and lasting family? How does Jesus' own teaching that 'whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother' (Mark 3:35) reshape the way we understand family itself?
10. As we close this entire study of the Christian home, look back not only over this lesson but over all twelve, from God's design for marriage to the household of God. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through this study. What is the single most important truth about the Christian home that you most need to carry forward, and what is one concrete change you will make in how you live as a spouse, parent, child, single believer, host, or member of God's family?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Mark 3:31–35, Jesus naming as His true family those who do the will of God; John 1:12–13, the right to become children of God, born not of blood but of God; Romans 8:14–17, the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry 'Abba! Father!'; 1 Peter 2:9–10, once not a people but now the people of God; Hebrews 10:24–25, stirring one another to love and not neglecting to meet together