

Your New Home (8 of 8)  
Joshua 24:14-15

## Introduction

1. For almost two months now, we have been together in an extreme home makeover. We've talked about parenting and marriage and finances. Today, I want to wrap this all up by highlighting the one thing that can make all the difference in your home.

2. Arguably the greatest writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, G. K. Chesterton, put it in perspective when he asked this question, "Can anyone tell me two things more vital to the race than these: what man shall marry what woman and what shall be the first things taught to their first child?"

3. May I tell you why that question is so vitally important in the 21st century? In this country...

- Every twenty-six seconds a child drops out of school<sup>i</sup>
- Every eleven seconds a child runs away from home<sup>ii</sup>
- Every forty-seven seconds a child is abused<sup>iii</sup>
- Every forty-two seconds a teenage has a baby<sup>iv</sup>
- Every seven minutes a child is arrested for drug abuse<sup>v</sup>
- Every thirty minutes a child is arrested for drunk driving<sup>vi</sup>
- Every thirty-six minutes a child is killed by a gun<sup>vii</sup>

4. I believe that Satan is real. I don't think Satan is just an idea, a symbol, a metaphor, or a myth. I believe there is a real, spiritual being called Satan, the accuser. Jesus calls him a thief and he says in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." As Christians we like to say, "God loves you and has a plan for your life." There is another truth. Satan hates you and he too has a plan for your life. Your family, your home, your marriage, your children are in his crosshairs.

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5. There is one decision that you can make that in effect wraps up all the other things we've been talking about. This one commitment can ensure that you have an extreme home makeover. It is a decision that can give you a new marriage. It can give you a new family. It can literally give you a new home. It is the decision that a man named, Joshua, makes before the Nation of Israel 3,500 years ago. Israel stands on the precipice of the future. They have gone into the Promised Land. They have conquered and they now control their own destiny. Joshua stands before the people he has led, not just as their commander and chief, he is speaking as a husband and a dad, who has a

family. He makes this declaration,

<sup>14</sup> *"Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*

6. Can you imagine what could happen in this country if every family made that same decision? Do you think the crime rate would go down? Do you think maybe jails and prisons might have to consolidate because there weren't enough inmates to fill them? Do you think our churches might be fuller? Do you think that marriages might be restored? Do you think that homes might be rebuilt?

7. No family can make a greater decision than Joshua and his family made. No father could ever set a greater example of how a father could lead his family than to make this commitment. In two verses, he tells us how we can make sure in every area of our home, our marriage and our family, we are consistently and continuously experiencing an extreme home makeover.

## **I. Your Family Must Be Lead to Worship the Lord**

1. Joshua begins by saying in verse 14, *"Now, therefore, fear the Lord."* It begins with worship.

You might be wondering, "Pastor, the text says 'fear the Lord,' but you're talking about worship. How do you make the leap from fear to worship?" Fear and worship go hand in hand. Let me explain.

2. In Deut. 6:13, after delivering the Ten Commandments to the people, Moses says, "Fear the Lord your God, serve him only." Now we jump all the to the New Testament 1,500 years later, and Satan takes Jesus out into the wilderness to tempt him, and Jesus refutes all of his temptations with Scripture. Satan offers him all the kingdoms of the world if only Jesus will bow and worship him. Jesus responds by quoting Deut. 6:13, but here is how it is translated in English, *"Worship the Lord your God and serve him only."* Whoa! Did you catch the difference? The Hebrew word is translated as *fear*, but the Greek word was translated as *worship*.

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3. In Hebrews 12:28 it says, *"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with*

*reverence and awe.*" Literally, the word is *fear* or *alarm*. The New Living Translation calls it *holy fear*. The King James *godly fear*. Godly fear combines these ideas of reverence, respect, awe and honor altogether.

4. Yes, there is healthy fear and unhealthy fear. There is godly fear and selfish, godless fear. Our problem with fear is not that we have too much fear. It's that we fear the wrong things. We fear those things that might destroy us and do us in, but we don't fear the God who loves us and can save us from our fears. The fears that do you in are those fears that you see as bigger than God. If you see God as bigger than something, you won't be afraid of that thing. If you fear God more than everything, you will not fear anything. This is why the number one lesson parents need to teach their children is to fear the Lord.  
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5. In the gospels and Acts people respond to Jesus and the power of the gospel with this reverent fear. In Luke 5, Jesus forgives a paralytic of his sins and the Pharisees are outraged because only God can forgive sins, right? So to prove he has divine authority, Jesus heals the man and he walks again, and verse 26 says all the people were filled with awe. The word there is *phobos*, from which we get our word *phobia*. They were filled with fear. It happens again when he raised a widow's son in Luke 7:16, and again when he casts demons into a herd of pigs in Luke 8.

6. At the end of Acts chapter 2, we have this glorious picture of the early church. They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer, and verse 43 says, "*Everyone was filled with phobos, fear.*" Out of that fear came the amazing fellowship and generous giving that Terry talked about last week. Acts 9:31 says the church was built up in the fear of the Lord.

7. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7:1 that we *perfect holiness in the fear of God*, and in Php 2:12 he calls us to *work out our salvation in fear and trembling*. Peter likewise tells us in 1 Pet. 1:17 to *conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth*.

8. Fear is what drives worship. You will not and cannot worship something you have no fear of. You will worship what you fear. Fear is worship. Whatever you are most afraid of, you will live your life in response to that thing. If you fear being alone, then you will go out and get in a relationship that you have no business being in and you know it, because of that fear. If you fear God, then you will worship and serve him, but if you fear something else more than God, then what happens in these moments is that we stop trusting that God is actually God, and we serve something else.  
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9. So, right out of the gate, Joshua says, "*Fear the Lord.*" He's not just talking to the nation. He is talking to families and to moms and dads, and he is telling them that the fear of the Lord begins at home. Parents, we have the mistaken idea that we bring our children to church to so they can learn to worship. That is not true. You should bring them to church to practice their worship. Children learn worship in the home. They know what fears drive your family, and they know what you family serves.

10. Why is this so important? Proverbs 9:10 says, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*" It doesn't matter how much your kids know if they don't know God. Knowing God is the basic foundation of all of life. Philippians 3:8 says, "*I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.*"

11. I want you to understand. It is not enough to talk about God. There are a lot of parents today who are not even Christians who talk about God. They talk about a higher power, the man upstairs, this god or that god, but that is not enough. We need to make sure we point our kids to the only God there is which is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to point our kids to Jesus Christ through whom alone they can have a relationship with God.

12. Incidentally, do you know one of the reasons why you've got to lead your kids to worship God? The worship of God protects you against the storms of life. Life is full storms. It is always tornado season in the human life and you never know when one is going to come up. As you well know, when a tornado comes, you need a shelter. Listen to Proverbs 14:26, "*He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.*"

## **II. Your Family Must Be Lead To Work For The Lord**

1. Joshua then charged his family to "*serve Him with all faithfulness.*" Fear drives worship, and what you worship you serve. If you fear something you will serve that thing. That's why the word serve is used 15 times in these closing verses of Joshua 24. True worship always motivates you to get involved in service. The Hebrew word used here means to work to expend energy and intensity to accomplish a task. When you worship, you do. You cannot claim to worship God, if you aren't serving him. Worship is so much more than singing songs, raising your hands, bowing your head in prayer, or taking communion.

2. There are two ways that you lead your children to serve the Lord. First, by your example. Every parent ought to be serving the Lord in some way in the church and out of the church. I like to say that every Christian should have at least one ministry in the church, but also one ministry in the community in which you can shine the light of Christ. Parents, you need to show by example why it is important to serve the Lord. Then you ought to teach your children to serve the Lord by your encouragement. Don't ever discount the fact that your kids (both children and teenagers) need to learn early in life how to serve the Lord.

3. Whether you realize it or not, your kids are picking up values from you whether you teach them formally or not. By just watching you, they know what fears drive the decisions in your home. They know what you are serving by what you do. They are seeing what is really important in your life. It doesn't matter what you say is important, but the way you spend your time and the way you spend your money, your checkbook, bank account, credit card statement and your calendar tells your kids what you worship and what you serve.

4. That is why Joshua said in verse 15, "*Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.*" Notice Joshua doesn't say they have a choice whether or not to serve, but they can choose whom they serve. Everybody serves somebody. You don't get a choice as to whether or not you serve somebody. You only get a choice in who you serve.

5. Last year Bob Dylan won a Nobel prize in Literature. One of his classic gospel songs from his 1979 album *Slow Train Coming* is called *Gotta Serve Somebody*.

You may be an Ambassador to England or France,  
You may like to gamble, you may like to dance,  
You may be the heavy weight champion of the world,  
You might be a socialite with a long string of pearls,  
But your gonna have to serve somebody...  
Well it may be the devil or it may be the Lord.  
But your gonna have to serve somebody.

6. The truth is you are serving somebody. You are either serving the true God or you are serving a false god. Everybody serves some god. Even the atheist who claims he doesn't believe in God serves some god. It may be the god of self, the god of ego, the god of success, the god of sex, the god of money, or the god of pleasure, but everybody serves some god. Which god are you going to pick? Whose side are you on?

7. There was a little boy, named Robert, who really wanted to help usher at a wedding, so an older man took him aside and explained to him the etiquette of escorting people at a wedding. He said, "Robert, you first have to ask them if they are a guest of the bride or the groom to determine where you need to seat them."

8. Robert seemed to understand that fairly well, so Robert was patiently waiting on the first person to come in to the wedding and a lady came walking in the door and he very politely offered his arm to this lady and said, "Ma'am whose side are you on?"

9. Everybody is on one side or the other. You are either serving God or you are serving somebody else. If you want to have an extreme home makeover you lead your family to work for the Lord.

10. All that we have talked about for eight weeks - this extreme home makeover, comes down to a decision. What god are you and your family going to serve? Some things in life are optional. There are some decisions you don't have to make. Some people choose not have a television. Some people choose to not be on Social media. Some people choose to not have a cell phone. Some people choose to not eat wheat, or not eat sugar. You can choose to not get the rental car insurance from the rental company. You don't have to go to college. You don't have to get married. But there are some decisions you have no choice but to make.

11. You may sit there and think you don't have to choose, but you just did. Making decisions is a very funny thing. Not to make a decision is to make a decision. It is kind of like getting up in the morning. Have you ever heard the alarm go off and shut it down and say to yourself, "I just can't decide whether I want to get up or not?" Well, you just did! When you refused to get up, you just decided to continue lying down. You can't avoid making a decision about God. Everyone makes it whether they realize it or not.

12. Listen to what Joshua said again. *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*

I want you to notice something. Joshua's children didn't have a choice. Joshua said in effect, "As long as they are my children and they eat at my table and sleep under my roof, they are going to be under my authority and they are going to serve the Lord." Parents, if you have children who are living in your home and they are not going to church and they are not living the way they ought to live, God is not going to hold them accountable, He is going to hold you accountable.

13. Don't be intimidated by the threat of turning your children against

church. You don't turn your children against bathing by making them take a bath. You don't turn your kids against nutrition by making them eat dinner. You are not going to turn your kid against church just by making him go to church. I can assure you if a kid grows up and quits going to church it won't be because you made him go to church. Now he or she may quit because you made them go to church, but you didn't live it out in your own life. They quit because of the hypocrisy, pretense and phoniness we put on, but we can't blame the church for that.

14. Several thousand years ago, this guy named, Joshua, stood up in front of an entire nation and said, "You choose what you are going to do, but as for me and my house, we are going to serve the Lord." I am raising the question today to parents - moms and dads. Have you said that about your family? God didn't put you here to win a popularity contest or to be your kids' best buddy. God put you here to make this basic decision - "As for me and my house, we are going to serve the Lord."

15. If you want a healthy family, a happy family, a holy family, if you want an extreme home makeover, then you begin by committing your life to Jesus Christ. After you have committed your life to Jesus Christ, you commit your family to Jesus Christ. You commit your marriage to Jesus Christ. You commit your children to Jesus Christ.

16. Let Son-Rise partner with you in that extreme home makeover process. Why do you think we have small groups? Why do you think we have Sunday School classes every week for all ages? Why do you think we have our Forge Student Ministry and CHAOS Kids on Wednesday nights. We are doing this to partner with you to help you and your family continuously experience that extreme home makeover that God wants you to have.

17. You are not just influencing your kids; you are influencing future generations. You will never have a greater calling in life, nor a greater accomplishment in life, than to see to it that you and your family know God, and love him and serve him, so that you can spend eternity with him.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-high-school-dropout-rates>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.pollyklaas.org/enews-archive/2013-enews/article-web-pages/the-truth-about-runaways.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/#.WLbxffkrKUK>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.tncac.org/child-abuse-information/statistics>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-teen-pregnancy>

<sup>v</sup> Burghardt, Walter J. (1996) Preaching the Word, New Haven, CT. Yale University Press p. 62

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.comtrea.org/news-archive/60-adolescent-programs/drug-informationeducation3>

<sup>vii</sup> Burghardt, Walter J. (1996) Preaching the Word, New Haven, CT. Yale University Press p. 62