

# ***Sabbath School Today*** **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

## ***Family Seasons***

### **Lesson 12: What Have They Seen in Your House?**

Home is the hardest place to be a Christian! Why? It's impossible to fool anybody where everybody knows you in and out. But if love (*agape*) prevails, happiness comes with it, and it will be easier for children to grow up as happy Christians. Sometimes, maybe too often, incipient adultery lies buried in the hearts of husband or wife and thus poisons the atmosphere for the children.

Therefore the supreme question we ask is—how can we know and receive the love (*agape*) of Christ into our marriages and homes? Many books address the problem. Some are helpful. But we begin by recognizing that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, and there we read that the love of Christ (*agape*) is the ultimate answer to these problems (2 Cor. 5:14-19; Eph. 5:25).

We begin with Bible Good News: “God sets the solitary in families” (Psalm 68:6). In other words, marriage is His plan for “solitary” persons who are lonely (see 1 Corinthians chapter 7 where Paul says that marriage may not be the way of happiness for some special people who are equally loved by the Lord). The word “solitary” has an interesting meaning in Hebrew—to be lonely like an only child. All of us truly belong in that category. Apart from Christ, we were lonely and God did for us what He did for solitary Adam. And friends are part of the Lord's gift to us all.

This is a prelude to His giving the “solitary” a home in His New Jerusalem forever. Rightly understood, family life in this great antitypical Day of Atonement is a prelude to the social fellowship of meeting Jesus, the holy angels, and all the redeemed and unfallen ones of heaven. Sabbath-keeping is the special gift of God for family happiness, the one day in the week when we are completely delivered from this terrible addiction of ogling the papers, the magazines, the neighbors, being tempted to covet their possessions. (Such envy ruins our happiness!) Sabbath makes being poor more endurable, and church fellowship to be a joy to lonely people.

Families are to be centers for sharing Jesus: “Our work for Christ is to begin with the family in the home. ... There is no missionary field more important than this. By precept and example parents are to teach their children to labor for the unconverted.” [1] “The mission of the home extends beyond its own members. The Christian home is to be an object lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principles of life. Such an illustration will be a power for good in the world. ... Nobler principles of life are introduced into other households, and an uplifting influence works in the community.” [2] Having learned and practiced mission and service at home, family members can then witness to others outside the home.

How did Jesus witness in His home-life? He was born into a family where His mother was a stepmother to four (probably difficult) boys whose names we have in Matthew 13:55-58, and there were at least also two stepsisters—all of whom were “older” than He and thus annoyed Him even into their maturity. This happened all during Jesus’ stay at home before the age of 30. Even during his ministry, the older brothers tried to tell Him what to do, with disdain. His being “despised and rejected of men” included that at His earthly home! (cf. John 7:3-5; it was the Jewish custom for older siblings to “boss” the younger ones around).

Imagine what it was like for this Baby to begin His consciousness by finding Himself in such a home atmosphere! After the early trip to Egypt, stepfather Joseph decided to take Mary and the Baby up to Nazareth to join the half-siblings. Children, if your home is less than perfect, think of Jesus! He endured earthly life in an unhappy home so that you may enjoy life in happy homes!

Think of Jesus’ love for His poor mother Mary, through whose soul was plunged that terrible sword that old Simeon had predicted in Luke 2:34, 35. No woman in all of earth’s history has borne a heavier burden than she! Think of a mother being forced to watch the Roman soldiers strip her Son naked and sling Him up on a cross and hear those people and the leaders of her church revile Him and condemn Him to hell! This is what it cost her to be the mother of our Savior! A domestic, earthly home was the setting for the life and death of the Son of God! He endured every pain that any of us have had to endure.

Ellen White makes clear that the coming of the 1888 message divinely “sent” to the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a fulfillment of God’s promise to send us “Elijah before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (Mal. 4:5, 6). His primary mission? To bring reconciliation between estranged hearts!

The full truth is always upbeat, positive, encouraging. Pentecostal power for witnessing followed Pentecostal repentance. A repeat of this glorious phenomenon awaits our repentance and reconciliation with the Lord.

God’s love for the world demands that His message of good news go everywhere with power. We know that it is not unfair of the Lord to withhold from us further showers of the latter rain until we repent in the same way that the Lord required ancient Israel to repent.

The sins of our spiritual fathers get ingrained into us, except for specific knowledge and repentance. Even though we were very few in number in 1888, the character of that unbelieving impenitence has been propagated throughout the worldwide body like a spreading virus. The disease must run its course until repentance can eradicate it. Until then, each new generation absorbs the same lukewarmness. The reality is that sin has been propagated ever since Eden “through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the action of mind on mind, ... reaching from mind to mind.” [3]

Now, whatever it may cost, let us take up our cross and follow Him all the way we find that He permits to lie before us.

—*Paul E. Penno*

**Endnotes:**

[1] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 429.

[2] Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 31.

[3] Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 16, 1901.

**Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oMMIJAOUYc>

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