Revival In The Home!

By Harold Vaughan

"God convicted me that I have been more dedicated to a sports team than to my family," said a broken man as he stood before his church. The previous night he gathered his wife, teenagers, and smaller children together to talk with them. There he confessed his failure in spiritual leadership in his home. This opened the door for others to become honest about their concerns and failures. The result was forgiveness, love, unity, and resolve to live God's way. Revival had come to their home!

...We must have a revival of spiritual leadership in the home. At church our kids hear about the way they should live. But at home they *see* our behavior. Children observe their parents all day long, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year. This is why true spiritual leadership must begin at home. The little booklet, *Spiritual Leadership Begins At Home*, by Tom Allen, lists four pillars on which strong families can be built – Radical Dedication; Relevant Discipleship; Respectability in Daily Life; and Regular Devotions.

Radical Dedication

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). This is a call for parents to make a radical commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who live with us know us best. It might be tempting to secure your fellow church members' opinions about your spiritual fervor. But how would your sons and daughters answer this question: "What is the most important thing in your parents' lives?" What would your kids say? Perhaps they would point to your job. Maybe they would single out "sports" or some hobby that receives so much attention.

Is your life characterized by a reckless abandon to the will of God? Are your children aware of your desire to be all-out for Jesus? Children raised by parents who are radical in their dedication to Christ will say without hesitation, "The most important thing to my Dad and Mom is Jesus Christ." It is impossible to hide the things we treasure in life. Jesus said, *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matt. 6:21).

Revival came to the home mentioned in the opening paragraph when a father smashed his "sports" idol and put first things first. As it should be, Dad led the way back to the Cross! He was the first to humble himself and seek reconciliation. It was into the home where sin first came and it is in the home where restitution is most difficult to make. Nothing affects the atmosphere of a home more than a parent showing humility and admitting, "I was wrong" and saying "I am sorry."

Relevant Discipleship

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The home is God's training center. Parenting is not just raising children; it is really preparing adults. Children are children only for a few years. Individuals who live a normal life span spend the majority of their lives as adults not children. The home, then, is a preparation center where children are to be nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

In Deuteronomy God instructed parents to impress His commandments on their offspring. They were to talk about them when sitting at home, while walking along the road, when lying down and when getting up. Moses encouraged parents to use every opportunity to influence their children toward godliness. Spiritual lessons can be learned in the ordinary experiences of daily life. All of life is the classroom in which we are to teach our children. Parents must be relevant in their discipleship.

Through example, as well as precept, kids need to see Christ in the lives of Mom and Dad. The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love his God and love his wife like Christ loved the church. When husbands and wives are not on speaking terms with each other, they are not on praying ground with God. Contention in the home grieves the Holy Spirit and creates a contentious atmosphere. "I love you" spoken verbally and demonstrated practically should be the trademark of our homes.

The greatest contribution a mother can make to her children is to reverence her husband. I once asked a godly pastor's wife the secret of raising four children who loved and walked with God. She said she never downtalked or talked back to her husband in front of her children. Her children picked up her submissive attitude and actions toward their father. They, in turn, adopted the same submissive attitude toward the ultimate authority – God.

Openness is a willingness to know the truth about myself and a willingness to let others know me as I really am. When sin entered the original family, the first effect was Adam and Eve attempting to hide from God among the trees of the Garden. Prior to the Fall they had been so transparent with God and each other. If they hid from God, you can be sure it was not long before they started hiding from each other! This elusive tendency has been passed on to most of us. The mask of pretense is one of the major hindrances to revival. Judgment-day honesty before God and those who know us best is the path to revival in the home. Those longing for unity in the home and church will find unity is really a by-product of "walking in the light." Openness (honesty) leads to brokenness. Brokenness leads to oneness. And oneness toward God and oneness before God is what it means to be a disciple. They *"will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35).

Respectability in Daily Life

The written Word is to be internalized by parents so that their very lifestyles will call for the respect and admiration of their children. The honor of our children should not simply be expected, it must be earned. The children of the virtuous woman (Prov. 31:10-31) *"arise and call her blessed"* because she earned their respect.

Roy Hession says revival "simply means a new life in hearts where the spiritual life has ebbed, but not a new life of self-effort or self-initiated activity. It is not man's life, but God's life, the life of Jesus filling us and flowing through us."

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Christian homes have to contend with the same culprit as unsaved families, namely the FLESH! Irritations, frayed tempers, selfishness, resentments, impatience, temptations, and the pressures of life must be responded to in the Spirit, not reached to in the flesh. Let's face it, we live in an imperfect world full of imperfect people who do imperfect things.

True spiritual leaders in the home walk what they talk. When they fail to do so, they humbly acknowledge that fact before God and the family. In this a parent earns respect from his spouse and other family members.

"Nothing between us and God, nothing between us and others" – the home is the first place this should be experienced. When was the last time you uttered those three important words, "I was wrong?" They are every bit as important as those other three words, "I love you." Since we are not always Mr. and Mrs. Right, we cannot secure respect by pretending we are always right. God promises to exalt us if we humble ourselves (Jas. 4:10). The way up is down. The ground is level *down* at the foot of the Cross.

Regular Devotions

Dads, it is our place to take the leadership in the spiritual training of our children and to teach them about character, decency, honor and industry. We are responsible under God to maintain a consistent time for teaching biblical principles that will help our children in their daily walks with God. One man said, "I am the boss in my home, but I am not the leader." He knew how to be in charge, but he did not know how to give spiritual direction. Sunday school teachers, pastors and Christian schools can never replace what our children learn at home, nor can the church resurrect what the home puts to death….

Family devotions should be something to look forward to, not something to dread. First, to be effective and successful, devotions do not have to be long. Second, they should normally be geared to the level of the youngest member. You do not need a PhD to sing a song, share a verse and pray. Third, spice it up with variety. Use various tools and means to learn God's Word. Family devotions can be a truly exciting time for learning if parents are diligent and innovative in their preparation.

Every revival is a Bible revival. In Nehemiah when the neglected law was rediscovered, it produced a renewed interest in the Word of the Lord. They read it for hours! Continual revival is maintained by continual obedience to God's revealed will. A revived home consists of individuals who consistently walk in the light where the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. Daily cleansing, daily emptying, daily filling, daily renewal, and redirection through the Word is the only way to abide in the True Vine.

Revival begins at home, and revival can begin in your home NOW. Perhaps it would be a good idea to call the family together for a "get honest" session. Confess failures, share concerns, and get the air cleared. Go on record that by God's grace you will live a life characterized by radical dedication, relevant discipleship, respectable daily living and regular devotions.

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