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Intro:

## Living in Love and Service To Our Home

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In session three today, we will discuss how to biblically establish our homes on the firm foundation of Christ. We will take what we learned from session two by inviting the Lord to build our house so that our labor can be fruitful, and not in vain. God's design for the family allows for it to be fruitful in all of the ways it is expressed.

“The people who should benefit first and foremost from our intimacy with Christ, the center of our “target,” should be our families. God established the home to be a picture of His heart toward us. It should be a place of order and grace, laughter and wholesomeness, vulnerability, trust, discipline, warmth, and, above all, love.”

- Living on Target, Chapter 4: “Living in Love and Service to the Home”

If you are a single person, God can establish your home as a place of comfort and peace that gives you rest and rejuvenates you for the work of ministry He has called you to fulfill. If you are married, God can establish your home as a place where each spouse benefits from being cherished, nurtured, and enriched by the affection of someone committed to them for life in the marriage covenant. If God has blessed you with children, he wants to establish your home as a safe place for them to learn about unconditional love and to be prepared to live a life of faithfulness and fruitfulness in Christ.

As you spend time in your small group discussion, you may be reminded of relationships with family members that are damaged or even broken. God has called you to the ministry of reconciliation, starting with those closest to you. Today you will be equipped to become a minister of reconciliation.

Scripture provides transformative spiritual insight and practical wisdom in establishing your home on the firm foundation of Christ. The breadth of what scripture teaches on establishing the home is more than can be covered in our session today. Reading chapter four of Living on Target will give you a much deeper understanding of what scripture has to say about the nuances of building a happy home.

**“Unless the Lord builds the house,  
those who build it labor in vain”**

Psalms 127:1



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## Agenda:

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### 01: Pray (Leader)

Ask God to establish our homes according to His word. “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Psalms 127:1). Pray that God will open our eyes to the importance of building on the firm foundation of Christ and becoming ministers of reconciliation where relationships are broken.

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### 02: Read (Participants)

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Psalms 127:1).

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### 03: Reflections (Leader) -

God equips people in every home situation to build their house on the solid foundation of Christ by giving them his grace, his word, his Spirit, and his people. Here are some practical ways that God equips people in each situation:

#### Single People:

- **Seek God first and foremost.** Matthew 6:33 says, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” This means that you should prioritize your relationship with God above everything else, and trust that he will provide for your needs and desires. You can seek God by spending time in his word, in prayer, in worship, and in fellowship with other believers. You can also seek his will for your life, and follow his guidance and direction.
- **Undivided Devotion.** 1 Corinthians 7:7 says: *“For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. In this verse, Paul expresses his personal preference for singleness but also acknowledges that God gives different callings to every person. Some are called to marriage, and some are called to singleness. Our challenge is being content in whatever state of life we are in. Both are honorable and acceptable before God, as long as they are done in obedience and faith. However, Paul also explains the advantages of singleness for those who can live in that state. In verses 32-35, he says: “But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the*



*world—how he may please his wife. There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.*

- Paul's point is that singleness allows a person to have **undivided devotion** to the Lord, without the distractions and responsibilities of marriage. A single person can focus more on serving God, pleasing Him, and growing in holiness. A single person can also be more flexible and available for God's work, especially during persecution or hardship. This does not mean that marriage is bad or inferior, or that married people cannot serve God or please Him. Paul himself affirms the goodness and sanctity of marriage in verses 1-9, and gives instructions for married couples to honor and love each other. He also recognizes that not everyone has the gift or desire for singleness, and that it is better to marry than to burn with passion. Therefore, the main idea that Paul wants to convey is that whether we are single or married, we should live in a way that glorifies God and seeks His will. We should use the gift and calling that God has given us to serve Him and His kingdom. We should not be anxious or discontent about our status, but be grateful and faithful to God. We should also respect and support those with a different gift or calling than us, and not judge or pressure them to conform to our preference.
- **Embrace God's plan and timing for your life.** Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." This means that God has a good and perfect plan for your life, and that he knows what is best for you. You can embrace God's plan and timing by being content and grateful for what you have, by being open and flexible to his leading, and by being patient and hopeful for what he has in store for you.

#### **Married people:**

- **Build the marriage on a foundation of love and respect.** Ephesians 5:25-27 says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." This means that husbands should love their wives sacrificially, faithfully, and unconditionally and that wives should respect and honor their husbands as the head of the



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family. Both spouses should seek to serve, support, and encourage each other in their spiritual growth and holiness.

- The concept of biblical submission seems incompatible with the self-empowerment message in culture. However, scripture instructs husbands to love their wives and wives to respect their husbands. However, it also commands all Christians to love and respect others as God does. A husband who disrespects his wife, or a wife who does not show love to her husband, is sinning against God and their spouse. A husband's unselfish love will encourage his wife to respect, love, and trust him. She will recognize Christ's qualities in him and be drawn closer to him. Scripture also urges a man to surrender his ambition to God, because a "real" man is not a selfish taker, but a joyful giver. The biblical principle of submission is not about empowering men, but about creating order, love, peace, and security in the home where the unbridled potential of love can flourish.
- **Communicate with each other honestly and kindly.** Ephesians 4:25-32 says, "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what helps build others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." This means that married couples should be honest, respectful, and gentle in their communication, and avoid lying, yelling, cursing, or insulting each other. They should also resolve their conflicts quickly and peacefully, and forgive each other as God forgives them.
- **Pray with and for each other regularly.** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." This means that married couples should cultivate a daily prayer habit, and share their joys, sorrows, needs, and praises with God and each other. They should also intercede for each other and their marriage and thank God for his grace and provision. Praying together strengthens the bond between spouses and aligns their hearts and minds with God's will.



**Parents:** God equips parents to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He also equips them to teach, discipline, and model godliness to their children. He provides them with a stewardship responsibility that is both challenging and rewarding, where they can influence the next generation for his kingdom.

- **Train your children in the way of the Lord.** Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” This means that parents should teach their children the truth and wisdom of God’s word, and model a life of faith and obedience to God. Parents should also help their children discover and develop their gifts and talents, and encourage them to use them for God’s glory.
- **Love your children unconditionally.** Titus 2:4 says that older women should teach younger women “to love their husbands and children.” This love is not based on performance, appearance, or behavior, but on the fact that children are a gift from God and created in his image. Parents should express their love to their children through words, actions, and affection, and also correct them when they do wrong. Parents should also show their children how to love God and others as Christ loves them.
- **Discipline your children with grace and truth.** Hebrews 12:11 says, “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Discipline is not the same as punishment, but rather a way of instructing and correcting children in a loving and respectful manner. Parents should discipline their children according to their age, personality, and situation, and always with the goal of helping them grow in godliness and maturity. Parents should also admit their own mistakes and ask for forgiveness when they fail.

**Children:**

Honoring our parents is important because it shows respect and reverence for God, who gave us life and commands us to obey him (Colossians 3:20). It also brings us blessings and long life, as God promised to his people (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2-3). Moreover, it reflects God’s love and grace to our parents and others, as we honor them with our words and actions (1 John 4:19; Proverbs 31:28).

- **Obey and respect them.** Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” This means that children should listen to and follow their parents’ instructions, as long as they follow God’s will and word. Children should also respect their parents by speaking to them kindly and not lying to



or deceiving them.

- **Love and care for them.** 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because he first loved us.” This means that children should love their parents as God loves them, and express their love through words and actions. Children should also care for their parents’ needs, especially when they are old, sick, or need help. 1 Timothy 5:4 says, “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.”
- **Appreciate and honor them.** Proverbs 23:22 says, “Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” This means that children should appreciate their parents for giving them life, raising them, and teaching them. Children should also honor their parents by remembering them, thanking them, and celebrating them. Proverbs 31:28 says, “Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.”

### Siblings:

God expects us to love, respect, and care for our biological brothers and sisters. He also equips and expects us to forgive, reconcile, and encourage our siblings. The sibling bond can be a beautiful source of strength and support. It is a natural bond that is meant to be a blessing, where they can share life, memories, and faith. If your relationship with a sibling is stressed, ask God to help you pursue peace. Some verses related to this are Psalm 133:1, Colossians 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

### Finances

Maintaining a Biblical perspective on money is essential in keeping the home safe, stable, and equipped for the future. Our generous tithe allows us to demonstrate our faithfulness and trust in God, who is the source of all our blessings. Giving generously also empowers the church to do work in the kingdom of God, by supporting ministry and outreach.

- **Jesus is our master**, not money. You Cannot Serve God and Riches. “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”
- **Money is a gift from God**, not an idol to worship. We should use it to honor him, not to hoard it for ourselves. (Matthew 6:24, 1 Timothy 6:10)
- **Money is a tool** for stewardship, not a source of security. We should use it to serve others, not to selfishly indulge ourselves. (Luke 16:10-13, 1 Timothy 6:17-19)
- **Money management** is a measure of faithfulness, not success. We should use it to glorify God, not to boast in ourselves. (Malachi 3:10, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15)



#### 04: Respond

Main Points:

- Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Psalms 127:1).
- Scripture gives for singles, married people, parents, children, and siblings.
- Maintaining a healthy home requires us to become ministers of reconciliation.

#### Questions:

In your small group, consider responding to one or more of these questions.

Word, Prayer, and Worship

- **How does reading the scripture daily** help you to align your thoughts, words, and actions with God's will and wisdom? How does this improve your communication and cooperation with your family members and others?
- **How does prayer** enable you to connect with God and to receive his power, grace, and peace? How does this empower you to overcome challenges and conflicts in your home and beyond?
- **How does prayer** enable you to connect with God and to receive his power, grace, and peace? How does this empower you to overcome challenges and conflicts with family members?
- **How does worship** express your love and gratitude to God and acknowledge his sovereignty and goodness? How does this inspire you to love and serve your family with joy and humility?
- Share an example in your family where you needed the wisdom of scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Finances

- At this present time, who is your master, money or Jesus? Talk about why



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## 05: The Rhythm of Reconciliation -

*Be Reconciled to God:*

- In your time with God, ask Him to show you areas where you are not reconciled to Him.
- Ask God to show you where you may have caused pain in the lives of others in your family, and for His guidance in pursuing reconciliation

Pursue Reconciliation With Family Members:

In your time with God, ask Him to show you the relationships in your life that need to be reconciled. Consider these three steps

- Step 1: Confess and repent of your own sins that contributed to the conflict. Seek God's forgiveness and grace, and be willing to change your attitude and behavior. (Psalm 51:1-4, 10-12; 1 John 1:9; James 4:8-10)
- Step 2: Forgive and seek forgiveness from the other party. Express your sorrow for the hurt you caused or received, and release any bitterness or resentment. Ask for and offer forgiveness, and commit to restoring the relationship. (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-22; Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:13)
- Step 3: Pursue peace and reconciliation with the other party. Seek to understand their perspective and feelings, and communicate your own in a respectful and honest way. Avoid blaming, accusing, or judging, and instead focus on finding common ground and solutions. (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17; Romans 12:18; 14:19; Philippians 2:3-4)

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## 06: React (All Participants)

**Singles:** If you are single, you may want to strengthen your bonds with your parents, siblings, or other relatives who are important to you. Some steps you can take are:

- Call or text them regularly and show interest in their lives. You can also send them cards, letters, or photos that remind them of your shared memories or express your appreciation.
- Plan a visit or a trip with them, if possible. Spending quality time together can help you reconnect and have fun. You can also invite them to join you in your hobbies or interests, or try something new together.
- Support them in their challenges and celebrate their achievements. Be there for them when they need a listening ear, a helping hand, or a shoulder to cry on. Also, congratulate them on their milestones, such as birthdays, graduations, promotions, or anniversaries.



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**Married couples:** If you are married, you may want to deepen your intimacy and communication with your spouse. Some steps you can take are:

- Express your love and affection to your spouse daily. You can say “I love you”, give them a hug or a kiss, or do something thoughtful for them. You can also surprise them with a gift, a compliment, or a romantic gesture.
- Set aside time for each other regularly. You can have a date night, a weekend getaway, or a special occasion to celebrate your relationship. You can also do simple things together, such as watching a movie, cooking a meal, or taking a walk.
- Resolve your conflicts peacefully and respectfully. You can use active listening, assertive communication, and problem-solving skills to address your issues and find solutions. You can also apologize when you are wrong, forgive when you are hurt, and compromise when you disagree.

**Parents:** If you are a parent, you may want to nurture and guide your children in a loving and supportive way. Some steps you can take are:

- Spend time with your children individually and as a family. You can play games, read books, do crafts, or go on outings with them. You can also have family meals, rituals, or traditions that create a sense of belonging and connection.
- Teach your children values and skills that will help them grow and thrive. You can model positive behavior, provide constructive feedback, and encourage their interests and talents. You can also set clear rules, expectations, and consequences, and be consistent and fair in enforcing them.
- Respect your children’s individuality and autonomy. You can listen to their opinions, feelings, and needs, and acknowledge their strengths and challenges. You can also give them choices, responsibilities, and opportunities to make decisions and learn from their mistakes.

**Adult children:** If you are an adult child, you may want to maintain a healthy and respectful relationship with your parents. Some steps you can take are:

- Keep in touch with your parents and update them on your life. You can call, email, or visit them regularly and share your news, plans, or concerns. You can also ask them about their health, well-being, or activities.
- Help your parents with their needs and challenges. You can offer your assistance, advice, or resources, or connect them with other sources of support. You can also check on them frequently and ensure their safety and comfort.
- Honor your parents and appreciate their contributions. You can thank them for their love, care, and sacrifices, and recognize their wisdom and experience.



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You can also celebrate their achievements, honor their legacy, and cherish their memories.

**Siblings:** If you have siblings, you may want to foster a close and friendly relationship with them. Some steps you can take are:

- Communicate with your siblings and show interest in their lives. You can chat, text, or video call them regularly and catch up on their news, events, or feelings. You can also share your thoughts, dreams, or fears with them.
- Spend time with your siblings and have fun together. You can reminisce about your childhood, watch old photos or videos, or tell stories or jokes. You can also do activities that you both enjoy, such as sports, music, or art.
- Support your siblings in their endeavors and challenges. You can cheer them on, motivate them, or inspire them to pursue their goals and passions. You can also comfort them, empathize with them, or advise them when they face difficulties or dilemmas.

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**07: Read Ahead**

- Living on Target Chapter 5: Living in Love and Service to the Church
- Workbook Session 4: Living in Love and Service to Church