

SHALOM *in the Home*

Week 2: "Seek First"

Aloha everyone! Or should I say, "Shalom-ie my Homies!" Because we are in Week 2 of our brand new series, *Shalom in the Home*. I can't take credit for that by the way, Pastor Lori came into staff meeting last Tuesday saying that, now I can't un-hear it and neither will you.

Last week, to kick off our series, we got to hear from the Spice Girls, Melissa Henderson and Pastor Theresa, or as I call them, Vanilla Spice and Sriracha Spice. They cast a vision for where we are going in this series. Remember they said Shalom represents wholeness, and in order to experience Shalom in the Home, we need to **Give God Control** and adopt His vision for our family. What is God's vision for family? It is that families would **Provide**. Now certainly, we provide basic necessities like food, water, clothing, Netflix :). But more than that, our homes are to provide Godly wisdom and instruction. One of our favorite verses here, and the most famous verse in all of Israel, the Shema says,

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One. ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up,"
(Deuteronomy 6:4-7 NIV).

This is the Lord's vision for families. When God says, "Impress them on your children," is He talking to school teachers, youth leaders, or pastors? No! He's talking to parents. He's saying our homes are to be the place where we provide Godly wisdom and instruction, as we sit around the house, as we're driving in the car, having dinner around the table, going to sleep and waking up. And what is our endgame? That every person in our home loves the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and strength. Our endgame is not Biblical proficiency, ministerial efficiency, ethics or morality. All those things are great, but what we want most of all is Spiritual Intimacy. Yes, I'm going to teach my kids God's Word, I will teach them how to serve, but what I'm after most is do you love Jesus with all of your heart, soul, and strength? All of those other things serve that purpose. My primary role as a Husband and a Father is to provide a home where that takes place. This is God's vision for our home. Is this our vision for our home?

OG Discussion Question: Do you agree/disagree that this is God's vision for family?

So in these first two weeks we're talking about, Giving God Control. It starts with adopting God's vision for our family and putting Him first. Then we're going to talk about, Owning My Role. I'm super excited because we're going to do something brand new. Over the next few weeks we're going to have 3 different panels to learn about how each member in the family plays a critical role toward wholeness. Next week we'll hear from married couples, the following week we'll hear from kids in the Church, and the third panel we'll hear from parents. Then we'll close our series by talking about, Making Life Whole. When each of us adopts God's vision for our family and owns our role, we will experience Shalom in the Home.

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Hazon

Last week we established that God has a vision for our home – our family. But if we're honest, we also have a vision for our family. *Giving God Control in the Family Sphere of Authority* means we submit to the Author's plan so that His vision becomes our vision. If not, we will have 'Di-vision' (Two visions). And wherever there are two visions you have division. So how do we make sure that God's vision is our vision? A big key comes from the Biblical definition of 'Vision'.

OG Discussion Question: How would you describe your vision for your family?

Last week Pastor Theresa introduced us to the Hebrew word for 'Vision' "hāzôn". And she taught us that Biblical vision goes beyond our personal aspirations to Spiritual revelation. hāzôn goes beyond our ability to see with our natural eyes but refers to a vision that comes through revelation by God's Word.

We have to get this Church. Most people's vision for their family is based on personal aspirations shaped by what they see with their eyes. Godly vision comes through spiritual revelation by His Word. When we build our lives upon the revelation of God's Word, He reveals who He created us to be, He will reveal His plans and purpose for each person in your family, He will reveal Your true value and worth. The Bible makes it clear, the only way we will have Shalom in the Home is if we have hāzôn. Without it, our families will struggle.

"Where there is no vision (hāzôn) [no revelation of God and His word], the people are unrestrained; But happy and blessed is he who keeps the law [of God]," (Proverbs 29:18 AMP).

The Bible is saying if we build our homes on our personal aspirations, what looks right to our eyes, what the world says is right, we will not experience Shalom. Quite the opposite,

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death," (Proverbs 14:12).

However, when we build our homes on revelation through God's Word, we will be happy and blessed.

OG Discussion Question: What is the difference between worldly vision and Godly vision? What would it look like for a family to adopt God's vision?

Illustration: Build Your Home on the Book

Some time ago I walked into my living room and saw my two older children playing. Judah, my middle child, was dancing around the room and Evangeline, my oldest, was building houses with some blocks. Upon closer inspection I noticed that Evangeline was building on a book. When I asked her why she was building her houses on a book she said, "Because when Judah dances around, my houses keep falling over." I took video of it and sure enough, Judah could dance all he wanted and as long as those houses were on the book, they wouldn't fall over.



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Church, I'm praying that 2022 is the year you decide to build your house upon The Book. See for years and years I built my life on aspirations, what I could see, what felt right (The Bible calls this sand). And whenever he wanted, the Devil would come waltzing on through and just knock everything down. One day I got tired of getting knocked down and I decided to build my life on God's vision for my life, revelation through His Word, who He says I am, (The Bible calls this the Rock). And the rains came down and the floods came up, the Devil came dancing through, but I'm here to testify that the house on the rock stands firm!

God's Word is tried, tested, and true. Only through God's Word can your home withstand the storms of life and maintain Shalom in the midst of all the craziness going on in the world today.

How many of you had any experience being a parent before your children were born? Maybe you babysat, maybe your family had pets, or maybe you were an older sibling. That was me. I was 12 when my younger brother was born. No, he wasn't a mistake. In the words of PBS painter Bob Ross, he was a "Happy little accident." So I learned about changing diapers and bottle feeding but nothing prepared me for having kids of my own.

On top of that, we are trying to raise our families in the midst of unprecedented times. Our families are adrift in uncharted waters. You keep hearing the phrase, "Return to normal." I have a news flash for you, there is nothing normal about where we are and where we're going. The last two years have changed everything and the stakes have never been higher.

There is a battle going on in our nation for the future of our children. Our nation is historically divided. Cost of living is at an all-time high. Virtually every single one of us has experienced the recent death of a loved one or friend. Suicide and depression are on the rise. Mental-health care providers are having to turn people away because they're overbooked. To say we are returning to 'normal' reveals a gross misunderstanding of the times we are living in and it has never been more critical for families to get this right. I'll be the first to admit, I don't have what it takes. I don't know what the future holds. All I can do is trust the One who holds the future.

OG Discussion Question: What are the biggest challenges you face in contending for Shalom in the Home?

Seek First

How do we build our homes on the Rock? How do we maintain Shalom? First, we need to make God the General Contractor. Pastor Alex Michel would talk about this.

"Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted," (Psalm 127:1 NLT).

"Poho da builda guys build one house, An Da One In Charge not da one dat build um."



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Unless God is the one building your house, poho you build um! All of your work will be wasted. Notice it doesn't say the builders won't work. You can build, but poho you build um!

Imagine you want to add an extension to your home. And you say to yourself, "I know exactly how I want this room to look. I can envision it in my mind." Then you get your friends together, you watch some DIY videos on YouTube, you call your Dad who knows a little about building, and you get to work. One day a guy pulls up in an unmarked truck and says, "I see you're adding an edition here." And you say, "Yea, isn't it great! It's everything I dreamed!" And he says, "I'm a building inspector. Did you build this to code?" And you say, "Well, I built it to the code of my heart!" What's he going to say? "Oh, well then you have a great day!" No! They're going to inspect it, you could face fines, and may even have to tear down what you built!" Poho! You need to build with someone who knows how to build to last. Why is it poho to build um? Because you're building something that will never be what you want it to be – something that will withstand the storms of life and last for generations to come.

When it comes to building our homes, many people are building out of order. We aren't building to code. How many of us know, you can build two homes with the exact same materials, but the order those materials are put into the house will largely determine the longevity and livability of that house. Jesus said many people have the order mixed up!

³¹ "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you," (Matthew 6:31-33 ESV).

In this passage Jesus is talking about the foundation of our lives. He's saying the world builds like this:

1. Food, Drink, Clothes
2. School, Sports, Behavior
3. God, Kingdom, Wisdom

The world seeks everything else first thinking the Kingdom and Righteousness will be added unto them. Jesus says we should build like this:

1. God, Kingdom, Wisdom
2. Everything else

Jesus says to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. When we build our homes according to God's vision and we provide Godly love and Godly wisdom, then God provides the rest.



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Balance Beam

But it's going to take trust and it's going to require faith because the majority of people won't share God's vision. You have to be willing to take risks, make mistakes, and even fall at times. Francis Chan talks about the balance beam routine. I don't know how many of you watch the Olympics. Especially with everything going on in our world it can feel shaky and unsettling. The pandemic introduced a lot of fear and trepidation into our world and if we're not careful we can become paralyzed. So we just hang on for dear life and hope that nothing scary happens. We don't take any risks, we don't step out in faith, and we don't take God at His Word. We just straddle the beam. And our greatest wish is that we'll die a peaceful and painless death. That we'll just slip away in our sleep and wake up before The Judge. Could you imagine if someone did that in the Olympics? How is He going to respond after that routine? Will He say, "Well done!"

As we close, I want to challenge you to live boldly. Adopting God's vision for your family is not for the faint of heart. It's much easier to play it safe and DIY it. But without Godly vision, people perish and unless God builds the house, poho we build um. Amen.

OG Discussion Question: What does it look like for a family to build on the foundation of God vs. adding God in later?