MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · BIBLE STUDY #11

The Family Altar

Worship at home — ten quiet minutes that can shape a hundred years

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In a small house in the mountains above Gonaïves, there was no electricity. Every evening, when the light started to go, a grandmother lit one lamp and called the children in from the yard. They complained. They came anyway. She read one verse. They sang one song — badly. She prayed for each child by name, out loud, and always ended the same way: *"Bondye, kenbe yo."* God, hold them.

That was it. Ten minutes. No sermon, no microphone, no building.

Thirty years later one of those children is a grown man in Boston, far from home, sitting in a car in a parking lot after the worst phone call of his life. And what comes back to him — before any advice, before any plan — is an old woman's voice singing off-key and saying his name to God.

That is what the Bible calls a **family altar**. And God asked for it on purpose.

The first church you ever attend is your house

When God gave His people instructions for passing faith to the next generation, He did not say, "Build a big church and hire a good preacher." He went straight to the kitchen table.

> *"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."*
>
> **Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (KJV)**

Look at the four places God names: sitting at home, walking on the road, lying down at night, getting up in the morning. That is not a church program. That is *an ordinary day*. God asked to be part of the ordinary day.

> Notice the order in verse 6: the words go in **your** heart first. You do not have to be a finished person to lead family worship. You only have to be a person who is walking with God out loud, where your family can see it.

What does it actually look like? (Three small things)

People imagine family worship must be long and impressive, so they never start. The Bible keeps it simple. Three things, ten minutes:

- **A verse.** One. Read it slowly. Ask one question: "What does this tell us about God?"
- **A song.** Even one chorus. Even off-key.
- **A prayer.** Short, honest, and out loud — with each person's name in it if you can.

> *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*
>
> **Colossians 3:16 (KJV)**

"Singing with grace in your hearts" — not with a good voice. God is not auditioning your family. He is visiting it.

Pick a time you already keep: before breakfast, or right after supper, or the last five minutes before the children sleep. A small thing you actually do beats a beautiful thing you only plan.

"But my house is not peaceful. My family is not all with me."

Then you are in good company, because the Bible's most famous family-worship verse was spoken by a man whose whole nation was drifting away from God. Joshua did not wait for everyone to agree. He decided for himself and for his own house:

> *"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

> **Joshua 24:15 (KJV)**

Start with the people who will sit down with you, even if that is one child, or a grandchild, or only you. You are not responsible for everyone's answer. You are responsible for the invitation.

And if your house feels far too broken to begin — remember where the New Testament's first family worship happened. Not in a nice living room. In a prison, at midnight, with a jailer who had been beating people hours earlier:

> *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."*
> **Acts 16:31 (KJV)**

That same night the jailer washed the prisoners' wounds, his whole household heard the word and was baptized, "and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (Acts 16:34). If God could start there, He can start in your house tonight.

A word to fathers — an invitation, not an accusation

Scripture speaks directly to fathers about this, and it is gentler than most of us expect:

> *"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*
> **Ephesians 6:4 (KJV)**

Read what God warns against: making your children angry. Harshness in the name of God is the fastest way to teach a child that God is harsh. The Bible's method is **nurture** — the word for feeding and raising something living. A child fed slowly, with patience, learns that God is safe.

If you have been absent from this, there is no shame here. Today counts. Tonight counts.

Why ten minutes matters a hundred years from now

God gave the reason Himself, and it stretches three generations past you:

> *"We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done...*

> *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."*
>
> **Psalm 78:4, 7 (KJV)**

The goal is not children who can recite verses. The goal is children who **set their hope in God** — who, when the hard phone call comes in a parking lot thirty years from now, have something to reach for.

Scripture also gives parents this wise principle: *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). Hold that the way the Bible means it — as a proverb, a general truth about how life usually works, not a guarantee that removes a child's own free choice. God Himself has children who wander. If yours has walked away, you did not fail the verse, and you are not outside of God's reach. Keep praying. Keep the lamp lit.

The heart of it: they are meeting a Person, not a rule

Here is what every family altar is really for. Not discipline. Not religion. A **Person**.

The goal of that lamp and that verse and that off-key song is that your children meet Jesus Christ for themselves — the One who died for them, rose for them, and offers forgiveness as a free gift they could never earn. You are not teaching your family to be good enough for God. You are introducing them to the God who came down to get them.

Ten minutes. A verse, a song, a prayer. Start tonight.

Before you close this — one question

Who is one person in your home you could call together tonight, even for five minutes?

You do not have to figure this out alone. We would be honored to pray with you, study the Bible with you, or help you build a simple worship routine your family will actually keep.

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or go deeper on this topic? Reach us today:

📞 **903-748-9353** · ✉ **jils19802012@gmail.com**

Or leave a comment, send us a direct message, and **subscribe + follow** on YouTube

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Viewer Handout

The Family Altar — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. God asked parents — not only pastors — to teach His words at home, in the ordinary day (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).
2. It takes three small things: a verse, a song, a prayer (Colossians 3:16).
3. You can decide for your own house even if others are not ready (Joshua 24:15).
4. Raise children with nurture, never with harshness (Ephesians 6:4).
5. The goal is that they set their hope in God — and meet Jesus for themselves (Psalm 78:7).

Memory verse

> *"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*
>
> **Joshua 24:15 (KJV)**

Think & pray about it

- What time of day is already quiet in my home — and could become our ten minutes?
- What did I learn about God from the home I grew up in, and what do I want to pass on differently?
- Who in my family needs to hear their own name spoken to God tonight?

FOR TEACHERS & SMALL GROUPS

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (the grandmother's lamp) — ask: "What is one thing you remember from the home you grew up in?"
- **Point 1 — The Command:** Deuteronomy 6:4-9. God chose the ordinary day: sitting, walking, lying down, rising up. Stress verse 6 — it starts in the parent's heart.
- **Point 2 — The Method:** Colossians 3:16. A verse, a song, a prayer. Ten minutes. Attach it to a time the family already keeps.
- **Point 3 — The Obstacle:** Joshua 24:15; Acts 16:31-34. Start with whoever will come; the first New Testament household worship began in a prison at midnight.
- **Point 4 — The Tone:** Ephesians 6:4. Nurture, not provoking. Harshness in God's name teaches a child that God is harsh.
- **Point 5 — The Purpose:** Psalm 78:4-7; Proverbs 22:6. Hope set in God across generations. Handle Proverbs 22:6 as a proverb, not a guarantee — be pastoral toward parents of prodigals.
- **Christ-centered close:** the family altar exists so children meet Jesus personally — grace, not performance.
- **Appeal:** invite each household to choose a time tonight and name it out loud. Offer prayer and Bible study.
- **Close:** memory verse (Joshua 24:15) + tease the next study ("The Ten Commandments: God's Law of Love").

EVIDENCE-BASED · FACT-CHECKED

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. You need theological training to lead worship at home.	God gave the instruction to ordinary parents, in their own house, in ordinary moments (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).
2. Family worship has to be long to count.	Scripture sets no length. It ties worship to sitting, walking, lying down and rising up — short moments woven through the day (Deuteronomy 6:7).
3. Only fathers can pass faith to children.	Timothy's faith came first through his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5).
4. Children are too young to understand the Bible.	Paul reminded Timothy that "from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures" (2 Timothy 3:15).
5. If my household is troubled, there is no point starting.	The first household worship in Acts began at midnight in a prison, in a jailer's broken life (Acts 16:31-34).
6. Proverbs 22:6 guarantees my child will never leave the faith.	It is a proverb — a wise general principle, not a promise that removes free choice. Each person still chooses whom to serve (Joshua 24:15; Ezekiel 18:20).
7. Worship at home replaces going to church.	Both are asked of us; believers are told not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25).
8. You need musical talent to sing at family worship.	The instruction is "singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" — the heart, not the voice (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19).
9. Strict rules are what make children love God.	Fathers are warned not to provoke their children to wrath (Ephesians 6:4); it is God's goodness that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4).
10. Single parents and grandparents raising children can't have a family altar.	Joshua spoke for "me and my house" whatever others did (Joshua 24:15), and a grandmother's faith reached Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5).

Where this comes from (Sources)

This study is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — family worship passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; Psalm 78:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:16; Acts 16:31-34; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:15 (King James Version, public domain).
- Seventh-day Adventist official belief #23, "Marriage and the Family": https://adventist.org/beliefs/official/marriage-and-the-family
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: https://gc.adventist.org/
- Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* and *Child Guidance* (public domain) — on worship in the home: https://whiteestate.org/ / https://m.egwwritings.org/

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