

“From the pen of a veteran Reformed pastor comes this hugely helpful compendium of practical Christian wisdom to lead believers into pulling their weight in a local church. It is the best thing on this theme that I have yet seen. Like the Bible, this book should be read once a year, and consulted often; not only by Baptists, but wherever strong life in Christ is the congregation’s goal. Some volumes merit rave reviews; this simple, down-to-earth publication is one of them.”

Dr. James I. Packer (1926 - 2020)

Theologian, Author of many volumes, including *Knowing God* and *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*

“As soon as I saw the return address on the package, I expected that I was in for a treat—and I wasn’t disappointed! I plunged into it and read it through in a day. I’m speaking about Curtis Thomas’ new book, *Life in the Body of Christ*. It was all I expected, and more. Here is a volume that you will want to hand to every member of your church—whether new or old. In his usual style, Curtis combines solid biblical teaching with easy-to-read, practical instructions about issues vital to every member of a congregation. This book fills a niche not previously dealt with. I cannot commend it highly enough.”

Dr. Jay E. Adams (1929 - 2020)

Author of over 100 volumes, including *Competent to Counsel* and *Shepherding God’s Flock*

“Biblical, spiritual, practical and sensible, this book fills a gaping hole in contemporary Christian literature. Curtis Thomas pours into these pages over forty years of fruitful experience in local church life and witness. They deserve to be widely read and will surely be of outstanding help to all who do so with a willingness to learn.”

Dr. John Blanchard (1932 - 2021)

Theologian, Apologist, Author of many volumes including *Right with God, Whatever Happened to Hell?* and *Does God Believe in Atheists?*

“*Life in the Body of Christ* is a practical and comprehensive handbook that should prove useful to every layperson in the local church. To my knowledge, there is nothing like it in print that addresses so many issues in such down-to-earth fashion. Even difficult subjects so often encountered in the church are faced head-on in a loving but insightful manner.”

Jerry Bridges (1929 - 2016)

Theologian, Author of many volumes, including *The Pursuit of Holiness* and *Trusting God*

“Life in the Body of Christ is yet another much-needed book from Curtis Thomas packed with theological soundness, pastoral wisdom and practical guidance. Every church member should read it and use it regularly. How many problems in churches could be solved quickly if the wise advice contained in this volume were conscientiously followed by church members.”

Joel R. Beeke

Pastor, Heritage Reformed Congregation, President, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Author of many volumes, including *A Quest for Full Assurance* and *A Reader’s Guide to Reformed Literature*

“A lot is said today about ‘dysfunctional’ families. Any group of sinful people who live together in close proximity for very long are going to experience some level of dysfunction! What my friend Curtis Thomas has done for us in this book is to provide practical help for minimizing our dysfunction in the family of God. My hope is that this text can press all of us toward unity in the body of Christ. And a pastor would be wise to present this book as a gift to new members who join their church.”

Bob Lepine

Co-Host, FamilyLife Today, frequent speaker, FamilyLife Marriage Conferences, author of *The Christian Husband*

“Life in the Body of Christ is a must read for every Christian. Every age group in every evangelical church should make it a point to study this book chapter by chapter, look seriously at every suggestion, and meditate on every Scripture suggested for that purpose. Curtis Thomas has given us a gift, a stimulus to edifying reflection and action on every pertinent aspect of corporate and individual responsibility and privilege to be pursued in the life of a local church. His suggestions are brief but turgid with biblical insight and healthy church experience. His questions are provocative of the most Christ-honoring train of thought. The variety of subjects that he introduces prompts a real seriousness about the comprehensiveness of Christian worship, discipleship, fellowship and witness. Don’t miss this simple but mature guide to an ever-increasing conformity to Christ-centered, Bible-warranted church life.”

Dr. Thomas J. Nettles

Retired Professor of Historical Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Author of many volumes, including *By His Grace and for His Glory* and *Praise Is His Gracious Choice*

“Curtis Thomas has a heart to see believers enjoy *Life in the Body of Christ* as God intended it to be. Drawing on his years of pastoral ministry, he provides practical wisdom concerning the privileges and responsibilities of being a part of a local congregation of believers. His counsel, if followed, would undoubtedly avert much potential confusion and conflict in local churches, and would certainly bring blessing to the people of God and glory to Christ, the Head of the church.”

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

Host of “Revive our Hearts” radio ministry and Author of several works including *A Place of Quiet Rest* and *Lies Women Believe*

“This eminently practical work from the pen of Curtis Thomas will prove helpful to a broad array of constituencies for years to come. For example, it would greatly benefit new believers as they assimilate into Bible-believing local churches. It would also serve well as a text for new members’ classes along with those surveying the fundamentals of the faith. Its bite-sized and well-written articles will be found appealing to all.”

Dr. George Zemek (1943 - 2023)

Theologian, Author of *Doing God’s Business God’s Way* and *A Biblical Theology of the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace*

“When I first saw the title of this book by Curtis Thomas, *Life in the Body of Christ*, I thought it might be a duplication of a book I coauthored called *Life in the Father’s House*. However, as I read through the book I became aware that his book actually was a companion volume to our book in that it covered many very helpful and practical issues with which our book does not deal. In my opinion, this book will provide in succinct form much useful information on a large variety of everyday issues that ordinary church members face. I encourage people to purchase the book, read it, study it and follow the many practical directives that are found in it. By so doing the individual Christian and the church corporate will be strengthened and blessed.”

Dr. Wayne Mack

Elder, Lynnwood Baptist Church, South Africa, Director, ACBC Africa, Author of several volumes, including *Strengthening Your Marriage*; *Your Family God’s Way*

“I am very enthusiastic about *Life in the Body of Christ*. It is a very well organized survey of the mansided privileges and responsibilities of Christian church members. Each chapter includes a basic presentation, often with a set of questions by which a person may evaluate his/her performance in this area. Then there are listed points of application for individuals and for groups. A brief passage of Scripture for meditation concludes the chapter. Any church should benefit by the dissemination and study of this work, especially those that accept Baptist Ecclesiology. I plan to use this book to test my own faithfulness as a church member from time to time.

I don't agree with the author's understanding of restrictive passages about women's ministry, but the list of activities that he views as open to women shows a concern for making sure that the church should reap the benefits of spiritual gifts that God gave to our sisters, who thus would have an opportunity to exercise them.”

Dr. Roger Nicole (1915 - 2010)

Swiss Reformed Baptist Theologian, Author of many works

“Curtis Thomas has condensed decades of church ministry into a few dozen, easy-to-understand pages. *Life in the Body of Christ* is versatile enough to work as a text in a new Christian's class to ground spiritual babes in the Christian life, in a new member's class, or in a small group study to help believers at all levels of maturity grow as part of Christ's church.”

Donald W. Whitney

Seminary Professor, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,
Author of several volumes, including *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* and *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church*

“Being a member of a church and serving within the body of Christ is not to be taken lightly. As a result, Curtis Thomas has written an excellent volume to practically help Christians function biblically along with others in the church. The book is easy to read, full of Scripture, challenging in its application and very appropriate for individual or group study. I highly recommend *Life in the Body of Christ*.”

Martha Peace

Biblical counselor, Conference Teacher, Author of *The Excellent Wife* and *Attitudes of a Transformed Heart*

“What does it mean to be a church member? Curtis Thomas has provided us an excellent compendium designed to instruct church members in the practice of living together in the body of Christ. This primer will help leaders upgrade the interest and involvement of members, new or old. We are again indebted to this veteran author and Christian leader for providing practical tools for our work.”

Jim Elliff

President and Founder, Christian Communicators Worldwide, Pastor, Conference Speaker and Author, *Pursuing God: A Seeker's Guide*

“I believe that *Life in the Body of Christ: Privileges and Responsibilities in the Local Church* by Curtis Thomas, will prove to be a very useful text for members of the body of Christ. It is a simple and practical expression of how Christians can be better and more effective in their churches and in their lives.”

Dr. D. James Kennedy (1930 - 2007)

Evangelist, Apologist, Author of many volumes, including *Evangelism Explosion*

“*Life in the Body of Christ* is a much needed tool to further equip church members to be vital and growing parts of the body of Christ. Curtis Thomas not only describes the most common issues faced by church members and leaders, but provides helpful insights and practical counsel to address them for the glory of Christ and for the sake of church unity. Though some may find views presented to differ from their own churches' confessional standards in a few matters of secondary importance, the general principles and sound biblical counsel articulated by Pastor Thomas are of great benefit to every believer who is concerned about biblical truth and being a faithful member of Christ's church.”

Tim J. Reed

Sr. Pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, AR

“It has been my privilege over the years to use Curtis' material, and he has done it again with an excellent manual on life in the Church. He covers many of the areas we all wrestle with from spiritual leadership in the family to very practical areas of church ministries and problems. I highly recommend it.”

Dr. Frank M. Barker, Jr. (1932 - 2021)

Founding Pastor, Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, AL

“Curtis Thomas has penned a marvelously instructive book on daily life in the body of Christ. I don’t know of another book on the Christian’s relationship to the Church that is quite like it. With brief yet thoroughly written chapters on virtually every aspect of church life, this resource is destined to become a practical standard for how to relate to our Lord and His blood-bought saints within a local assembly. Whether you are a pastor, elder, deacon, or in some other function of church leadership, you will find forty-plus years of skilled counsel which has come out of Thomas’ own applied knowledge of Scripture and deep local church ministry experience. Equally, whether you are a layman with a long and fruitful ministry in the local church, or a new believer in Jesus who knows very little about your relationship to fellow believers, this book has been written with you in mind. Having been his colleague in pastoral ministry for several years, I can confidently say that Curtis Thomas knows of what he writes in these pages. I pray that this unique volume would become widely read and thoughtfully applied. Follow his guidance and you will enjoy life in the body of Christ!”

Dr. S. Lance Quinn

Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer, The Expositors Seminary, Coauthor, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented*

“In our day the church is no longer the object of appreciation, devotion and commitment. Curtis Thomas has provided for all of us, in general, and leaders, in particular, an excellent teaching tool for discipleship, as well as, a primer for believers to properly engage in the church to the fullest blessing that God intended and the fullest devotion to which He calls us. The body of Christ, His glorious bride, was purchased by His blood and is headed into eternity.”

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III (1948 - 2023)

Sr. Pastor, Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Al, Conference Speaker, Author of several titles, including *From Embers to a Flame*

“Curtis Thomas loves the Church! And his unique book *Life in the Body of Christ* celebrates his love by providing encyclopedic wisdom for living out the glorious mystery of the Church. Individuals and families will turn to this book again and again for winsome biblical advice.”

R. Kent Hughes

Former Senior Pastor, College Church, Wheaton, Illinois, author of *Disciplines of a Godly Man*

“Today’s Christians have largely lost sight of what it means to be a member of a local congregation. In far too many cases, the local church has been turned into a voluntary association, and church membership has been reduced to a matter of occasional participation and minimal involvement. Curtis C. Thomas knows that the Bible calls us to a far higher vision. Now retired after almost a half-century in ministry, Thomas writes with a wealth of experience that he draws from deep wells of conviction. These short chapters will instruct, encourage and inform. *Life in the Body of Christ* offers a wealth of wisdom and points the way towards a recovery of biblical church membership.”

Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Host, *The Briefing* Podcast, Author of *The Conviction to Lead* and *He Is Not Silent*

“This book is a compendium of wisdom about a neglected topic—churchmanship. Curtis Thomas writes as one who has been seasoned by a life consumed with the study of the Word of God, with years of pastoral experience and the godly maturity of a gracious saint who has run the race and kept the faith. His insights into the nature of the Christian life, the needs of God’s people and the centrality of the church in the plan of God are superlative. This is a great book. If widely read and taken to heart, it will revitalize God’s people and strengthen Christ’s church.”

Dr. Tedd Tripp

Pastor Emeritus, Grace Fellowship Church, Hazelton, PA, President, Shepherding a Child’s Heart Ministries, Author of *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* and *Hints for Parents: With Gospel Encouragements*

“My first introduction to Curtis Thomas was through his immensely helpful book on the five points of Calvinism. What I still like best about that book is the way it outlines the subject with plain simplicity and precision. It instantly clears away a lot of the cobwebs of confusion for people who are struggling to understand a complex issue. *Life in the Body of Christ* has the same kind of straight-to-the-point clarity. It’s a wonderful overview of what church life ought to be. I think it will be a valuable resource—not only for people who are new to the church, but also for seasoned pastors and church leaders looking for a simple roadmap in an age when church ministry has begun to seem unnecessarily complex.”

Phillip R. Johnson

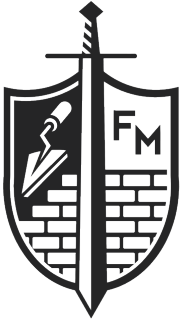
Executive Director and Radio Host, Grace to You, Pastor and Elder, Grace Community Church, Author and Conference Speaker

Life in the Body of Christ

**Privileges and Responsibilities
In the Local Church**

Curtis C. Thomas





Published by

Founders Ministries

P.O. Box 150931 • Cape Coral, FL • 33915

Phone: (888) 525 - 1689

Electronic Mail: officeadmin@founders.org or

Website: www.founders.org

Original Edition © 2006 Curtis C. Thomas
Hardcover Edition, 2023

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 978-1-943539-43-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023937835

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Throughout this material the titles “pastor,” “elder,” “shepherd,” “minister,” “bishop” and “overseer” may be used synonymously. The Scriptures use these titles for the same office and work (see 1 Timothy 3:1–7, 4:6; 5:17–20; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Peter 5:1–4 and Acts 20:28), so they will be used here interchangeably.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the pastors/elders, deacons, staff and members of The Bible Church of Little Rock, a rich fellowship of people who take the Word of God as their rule of faith and practice. While not perfect, this body of believers and her leaders strive to live out the many biblical principles mentioned in this book. It is a joy and a gracious gift of God that my wife and I have the privilege of being a part of this congregation.

and to

Tom Arnold, Wade Arnold, Don Bailey, Rob Bailey, David Booth, Charles Borth, Jim Brown, George Cain, Keith Danforth, Rich Daniel, Jimmy DeMoss, Larry Fisher, Richard Fulenwider, Ted Gibson, B. W. Hendricks, Theron Howard, Gary Huitink, Carl Hunt, Tim McCoy, Frank McFerrin, Brian Olmstead, Ben Rush, Jerry Samons, Bill Simmons, Tom Strickland, Lawrence Stolzer, Bill Thomas, Dr. Jack Somers, Kevin Sontag, Calvin Squires, Jim Viner, Joe Walker, Henry Wood, Olin Wright and to the men in our Wednesday morning Bible study and prayer time.

Men, your commitment to Christ and your many years of friendship, prayers, fellowship, support, encouragement and help in so many ways have been a constant source of blessings to me, my family and my ministry.

Introduction

Several years ago my book, *Practical Wisdom for Pastors*, was completed. After forty four years in the ministry I wanted to leave something in print for new pastors coming on the scene which might benefit them as they face everyday practical issues.

Having also been a church member for almost sixty years, it occurred to me that there is not, to my knowledge, a work in print which addresses a large variety of everyday issues which ordinary church members regularly face. There are many books that deal very adequately with *some* of these areas. At the end of this work I have provided a brief list of those resources. It is not an exhaustive bibliography. In fact, there is such a large number of books on the subject that, should I have tried to list them all, you might have found it discouraging to dig through the list. But I believe that you will find the ones included to be helpful.

The work you hold in your hand is designed to discuss a number of subjects, but in less detail, than some of the books included in the list of resources mentioned above. To give them a thorough treatment would have taken the book beyond its purpose. Rather it is hoped that the work will be suggestive and will provide practical ways in which members can better serve their congregations and, ultimately, be better servants of our Lord. To help facilitate that, these discussions are designed to be interactive. At the end of each article there are questions to answer and specific suggestions for you to implement, both individually and in a group setting.

The Word of God teaches us that our Lord gave His life for His church, that He loves His church and that He gave gifts to His church to use in His Kingdom until He returns to take her to glory. His church here on earth is not perfect, but Christ assures us that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Samuel J. Stone captures this theme in his wonderful 1866 hymn:

The church's one foundation, is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation, by water and the Word;

From heav'n He came and sought her, to be His holy Bride;
 With His own blood He bought her and for her life He died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth;
 Her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth;
 One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food;
 And to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder, men see her sore oppressed;
 By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed;
 Yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, "How long?"
 And soon the night of weeping, shall be the morn of song.

The church shall never perish! Her dear Lord to defend;
 To guide, sustain, and cherish, is with her to the end;
 Though there be those that hate her and false sons in her pale;
 Against or foe or traitor, she ever shall prevail.

'Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war;
 She waits the consumation, of peace forever more;
 Till with the vision glorious, Her longing eyes are blest;
 And the great church victorious, shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union, with God the three in one;
 With mystic sweet communion, with those whose rest is won;
 O happy ones and holy! Lord give us grace that we;
 Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.

I hope that as you proceed through this work that it may help you in some manner to be a wiser, more faithful and more joyful member, not only of your own local congregation, but also of that universal body of believers for whom Christ gave His life.

Curtis C. Thomas

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Section One

Personal Responsibilities

OUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY

Our Own Salvation!

“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (Romans 3:21–22a).

At the age of seventeen I became a believer. It was the first time I had clearly understood the gospel. The spiritual light came on and I finally understood why Christ had died. Up to that point my theology was very fuzzy (actually, incorrect). Over a couple of weeks, in the spring of 1954, I realized that for me to be truly saved, to have my sins forgiven, to be justified before God, to be set right before an almighty and holy God, I must put my personal faith in Jesus Christ as my sin-bearer, the only One who *could take away* the awful guilt of my many sins.

At the age of nine I had joined a church, been immersed and had begun attending Sunday School and church services somewhat regularly. I would try to pray each night before going to sleep. I tried to live a moral, upright life. I was somewhat obedient to my parents and regularly prayed that they would not go to hell (they seldom attended church, especially my father). No individual ever asked me if I was saved, but should they have, I would have answered “yes.” Yet, I often feared the torment of hell. I knew that I sinned and was constantly fearful that God would cast me into an everlasting fire. In those days farmers in our area would burn off their fields in the fall of the year. Just seeing those large fires would cause me severe mental and emotional anguish. I could picture myself in the middle of one of them calling on the rocks and hills to fall on me (at that time, more often than today, preachers gave “hell-fire and brimstone” sermons).

My reaction was to try to be more moral, to attend church services more frequently, to work harder on my Sunday School assignments, often lying awake at night fearing the imminent return of

Christ and my subsequent judgment. I cannot count the number of times I prayed that God would not cast me and my family into the endless torment of hell.

As I look back, I was trying to do what most people do: save myself by such things as baptism, church membership, prayer and morality.

But in the spring of 1954, God began a work of grace in my heart. A gentleman came to our home in an attempt to reach my brother who had joined a church cult. My brother would not meet with him (although my brother was saved almost ten years later). Instead, in God's gracious providence, the man approached me about teaching me the Scriptures. He asked if I could gather up some of my high school buddies for a class in our home. I was able to do so and in a short time, we began studying Romans. We had requested Revelation, but he was wise enough to steer us in the direction of a portion of the Scriptures that stressed the basics of the faith—Paul's letter to the Romans.

Within two weeks we came to Romans 1:16–17, “the just shall live by faith.” God suddenly removed the scales from my eyes. I realized that my perspective on salvation had been totally wrong. It was not by morality, works, sincerity, church attendance or any other human merit or achievement. It was by grace, through faith in Christ as my substitute. The shock to my system turned out to be the salvation of my soul. It was as if I had believed all my life that the earth was flat and suddenly realized that it was a big round ball.

The burden was lifted and God's peace filled my soul. I knew that a righteous God had now adopted me into His family and that I would never have to face His wrath. Instead I learned that God had poured out His wrath upon His only Son in my place and that I was now saved eternally. My worldview was changed drastically. Later I realized what had taken place, that I had been born again by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

Obedience to God, church attendance and the study of the Scriptures now came to mean a way of life, not a way to obtain life. I understood my depravity and Satan's pull on me and why it was impossible to live a perfect life. I began to learn that the Holy Spirit was there to help me in my weaknesses and, though I was still a sinner, I had the finished work of Christ to atone for my sins. In addition, I was shown that the Spirit of God would help me in my feeble

efforts to live the Christian life, to pray and to study God's Word. And I learned that my Lord was in heaven interceding for me.

What a tremendous relief! I learned that though I would spend the remainder of my days on this earth in a struggle with the world, my flesh and the Devil, yet I had now read the end of the book and knew that through Christ all of us who trust in Him would be "more than conquerors."

What about you? I assume that since you have picked up this book that you are probably a member of a local congregation. Perhaps you are a serious church member who wants to know what ministry you should engage in and what your responsibilities are. But of first importance, are you really a child of God? Have your sins been forgiven through the blood of Christ? Is He your Savior? Or, are you trying to save yourself by your own merits? Church membership? Baptism? Sincerity? Responsible lifestyle?

If so, just as I tried to earn my way into heaven, you are spiritually lost and are still accountable to God for your sins. Your first responsibility, therefore, in your journey to a ministry or church responsibility, must start at priority one—your own personal salvation. The Scriptures tell us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to call on Him to save us and to trust in His work on the cross on our behalf (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9–13). And John 6:37–40 makes it abundantly clear that whoever comes to Christ will never be driven away; that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life and will be raised up at the coming of the Lord.

Paul, in Romans 12:1–3, instructs us that we are to be living sacrifices (servants of the Lord and of His church), but in order for us to be living sacrifices we must first be among the living—those who have been made alive (born again from above) through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. It is only at that point that we are on the road to acceptable service.

Application

For Individuals:

1. Read Romans 3:9–31 and 10:1–13. Summarize in one sentence what these verses are saying as to how to be saved.

2. What are you trusting in to get you to heaven?
3. List some evidences in your life which demonstrate that you have been born again by the Spirit of God.

For Groups:

1. What are some of the many ways by which people are trying to get to heaven?
2. Locate at least ten passages of Scripture in which the gospel method of salvation is clearly presented.
3. What are some of the better ways you have discovered to evangelize the lost?
4. Discuss some of the obstacles you have met in evangelizing and some of the ways you have overcome these obstacles.

Meditation

Prayerfully think through the meaning and implications of Romans 5:6–11.

OUR SECOND RESPONSIBILITY

Our Family's Salvation

“But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord”
(Joshua 24:15).

During my forty-plus years of ministry I have had the privilege of being around people who were serious about “soul-winning.” I have listened to their sincere and earnest prayers for the salvation of their neighbors, co-workers, friends and classmates. I have seen them offer to work in visitation and “soul-winning” programs. I have attended witness-training classes with them. And I can testify to their deep desire to see others come to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Yet, in some instances, regrettably, I have not seen the same earnestness for the members of their immediate family—a tremendous witnessing field with whom they have contact daily. God has graciously set each of us in the middle of this evangelistic field. Our families do see our sinful nature much more than strangers, making it hard for us to witness to them. Yet, God has placed us there and expects us to present the gospel to them regularly.

Make no mistake about it. God is the only one who saves. We cannot save anyone. But we can be the means which God uses to bring others to faith in His Son. Actually, we are the natural means for God to use in reaching our families. We must pray daily and fervently for them. Our lives must be a good example for them to follow. Our love for them should be genuine and sacrificial. We should encourage them about a serious study of the Word of God. We must seek to make it possible for them to participate in a solid, evangelical church. They should hear from us a clear presentation of the basics of the gospel. They must see a joyful attitude in us as we serve Christ and His people. Our entire lifestyle should be distinctly Christian. Our family standards must be based on clear biblical principles. Repentance, forgiveness, respect for authority and other Christian virtues should be both taught and exemplified.

It is wonderful for church members to want to evangelize the neighborhood. May there be a continuous army of such good people. But more basic than that is the need for evangelizing our own families. In the final analysis, our families are our strictest responsibility and will either be the occasion of our highest joy, or will bring to us our deepest regrets.

Application

For Individuals:

1. Does your private life before your family command respect?
2. Have you clearly explained the basics of the gospel to each member of your immediate family? Your extended family?
3. Do you regularly pray by name for the members of your family?
4. Make a list of those family members to whom you plan to present the gospel.

For Groups:

1. Discuss some of the ways you have found helpful in witnessing to your family members.
2. Discuss some of the ways that you have found that are not helpful in witnessing to your family members.
3. Provide the group with some names of your family members to whom you would like to witness and then pray as a group for their salvation.

Meditation

Prayerfully think through the meaning and implications of Ephesians 5:1–6:4 and 2 Timothy 1:5.