

Holding Your Family Together in Christ

“Life Together in the Christian Family,” Fall Bible Institute, Waseca Circuit (LCMS)

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Introduction: A Personal Testimony

- Baptism: How Christ came to me ...
- Bible Reading: How the Holy Spirit has preserved my faith and equipped me to serve others ...
- “Hausvater”: Becoming a spiritually responsible head of household ...

God’s Design for the Family

- From Natural Law (and Scripture, too):
 - Marriage is the divinely established (Gen 2:18) life-long union (Mt 19:4-6) celebrating sexual complementarity (Gen 1:27), children (Gen 1:28), and chastity (Gen 2:25).
 - Pagans can, and should, recognize the natural family, even apart from Scripture.
- From Scripture Alone:
 - Marriage proclaims the love of Christ for the Church and echoes the submission of the Church to her Head, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 5:22-33).
 - Submission does not deny equality (Athanasian Creed; 1 Co 11:3; Php 2:6-7).
 - Christ Himself is both the perfect Head (Eph 5:23) and the perfect Submitter (Lk 22:42).
 - Marital parenthood is the primary means for evangelizing the next generation (Dt 6:6-7; Ps 78:5-7; Pr 22:6; Mal 2:15; Ac 2:38-39; Eph 6:4).
- From Luther’s Large Catechism:

“God has instituted marriage before all other estates, and therefore created man and woman separately (as is evident), not for lewdness, but that they should legitimately live together, be fruitful, beget children, and nourish and train them to the honor of God.” (Sixth Commandment, LC I, 207)

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- Receiving God’s gifts as a family in the Divine Service:
 - There can be no Christian family, no Christian anything, apart from Word and Sacrament.
 - Whether as a household of one, or of twenty-one, let the Divine Service set the rhythm.
- Preserving Your Marriage through Christ-centered Love and Respect:
 - Ephesians 5:33—“Let each one of you [husbands] in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”
 - Avoid the “Crazy Cycle” and enjoy the “Rewarded Cycle” (Emerson Eggerichs, *Love and Respect*, reviewed by Pr. Jonathan Conner at www.hausvater.org/book-reviews).
- Training Your Children with a Christian Home Library:
 - God has ordained every family to be a “home school” family at some level.
 - Core Curriculum: the Bible, the Hymnal, and the Catechism.
- Holding Your Family Together in Christ at the Family Altar (see p. 2 for suggestions)

Encouragement and Suggestions for Family Devotions from the Hausvater Project

- From the Hausvater Project vision statement (www.hausvater.org/about):
 - “that husbands lead their families in home devotions, regular church attendance, catechetical instruction, and lifelong Christian discipleship”
 - “that parents take active and primary roles in the Christian upbringing and general education of their children”
- Feature articles (www.hausvater.org/articles):
 - “A Mother’s Journey into Homeschooling,” by Danielle M. Olson
 - “Discipleship in the Christian Home: An Historical Perspective,” by Ryan MacPherson
 - “Family Worship: Biblical Suggestions for Your Home,” by Jeremie and Molly Schulz
 - “Raising Children in the Paideia of the Lord,” by Erich Heidenreich
 - “‘Talk of Them When You Sit in Your House’: A Father Shares His Family’s ‘Deuteronomy 6’ Experiences,” by Emil B. Huntington
- Book Reviews (www.hausvater.org/book-reviews):
 - “A Hausmutter Reading List,” a review of several books, by Marie MacPherson
 - “Dads, It’s Time to Read God’s Word to Your Family,” a review of Rob Otto’s *Rise Up!: For Dads Who Want to Lead Boldly*, by John Merseeth, Jr.
 - “The Love a Wife Desires, the Respect a Husband Needs,” a review of Emerson Eggerich’s *Love and Respect*, by Jonathan Conner
- Bible Study Resources (www.hausvater.org/bible-studies):
 - “Every Thought Captive to Christ”: Suitable for both individual and group Bible studies, whether in the home or at church, the following questions, which put Law before Gospel and Justification before Sanctification, memorably spell C-A-P-T-I-V-E. It is through the study of Scripture that Christians learn to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5).
 - **CONFESSION:** Of which sins does this passage convict me?
 - **ABSOLUTION:** How does this passage reveal God’s forgiveness for me in Christ?
 - **PRAYER:** For what does this passage instruct me to ask or thank God?
 - **TRADITION:** How has this passage inspired the creeds, confessions, liturgy, hymns, or catechism of my church?
 - **INTERPRETATION:** How do other passages help me to interpret this one? or How does this passage help me to interpret others?
 - **VOCATION:** How does this passage guide me in my life as a(n) [insert my station in life]?
 - **EVANGELISM:** How can I share with an unbeliever what this passage has taught me about God’s grace in Christ?
 - “A Four–Year Cycle for Christian Homes”: Take your family through the entire Bible in four years by reading just 20 to 25 verse per day! (A free PDF download provides further details.)
 - **YEAR ONE:** Hebrew History
 - **YEAR TWO:** Minor Prophets and Christian History
 - **YEAR THREE:** Wisdom Literature and Major Prophets
 - **YEAR FOUR:** Old and New Testament Doctrine