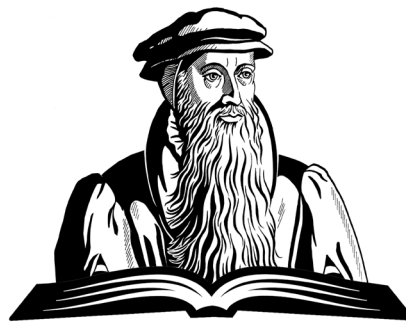


VIDEO DOCUMENTARY SERIES

Family Worship

EPISODE V:
PRACTICAL GUIDANCE
FOR FAMILY WORSHIP



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Family Worship

IN FIVE EPISODES

Episode I. Family Worship, An Introduction

Episode II. What to Include in Family Worship

Episode III. The Benefits of Family Worship

Episode IV. The History of Family Worship

Episode V. Practical Guidance for Family Worship

VIDEO DOCUMENTARY SERIES

Family Worship

EPISODE V

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

JUST MARRIED

MICHAEL SPANGLER

So some married couples want to know, or engaged couples, when should they begin Family Worship. Well, I think the simple answer is, as soon as you're a family, which begins the day you are married. Why not the very day of the wedding? Make it the first thing you do together, as the first fruits of your married life to God. There is no reason not to, and every reason to do it, and I think the simple response is, if from the Word of God, and from the blessings of Family Worship, every family ought to do it, then even a new family ought to do it. And we need to remember too that the beginning of things are often where habits are formed, and what better habit to form than praying together, and reading the Bible together, and singing Psalms together as a family?

GRAEME CRAIG

They should begin it on their wedding day, because good habits should be begun immediately, otherwise procrastination creeps in, and we end up putting it off. And yes, it might just be then a husband and wife, but they are a family, and they should worship together as a family. And it will help cement the marriage in the Scriptures, and show the young married couple the example of the love of Christ for the church, and encourage them in their relative duties as husband and wife. It's in the mind that Family Worship is for all families, whether there are children or not. The children may have grown up—we don't stop Family Worship then. So it should begin as soon as a home is formed. I even think of widows who I have known who are on their own, and they would speak of keeping Family Worship, as well as perhaps their own devotional time, almost trying to keep that awareness that there's a family, even though it's only me, we're worshiping. And if somebody else went to their house, that was great, because they could join with them in worship, and you've got something that was more like what you would think Family Worship should be.

WILLIAM MACLEOD

A young couple who just got married, they should really begin Family Worship at the very beginning of their marriage life. Even from the very first night that they come together. It's good to set that pattern, and put God at the very center of their lives and their marriage. Indeed, it's a good thing for a couple when they're going together to have times of worship, where they read and pray together, and in that sense, they begin the pattern even before they actually get married. And, of course, families who pray together stay together.

IAN MACLEOD

A new married couple should begin Family Worship immediately on the first night of their marriage. Indeed, if they have both had Family Worship in their homes since they were growing up, it's all they've ever known. Again, it would be unthinkable for them not to. On this happy day, is there not much reason to come at the very inception of this new family life to praise the Lord, to thank the Lord for his great goodness to them, and to seek his blessing in married life together? So a new family should begin Family Worship on their first day.

ROBERT McCURLEY

The question, how soon should a newly married couple begin Family Worship, is really answered by another question, When does a family begin? And the answer is that a family begins as soon as a man and woman are married, when they are united by vows in the presence of God. And so, if that's when a family begins, then that's when Family Worship should begin. We don't think in terms of a family only beginning once a couple begins to have children. No, at that point, children are being added to a family that already exists. And so I tell young couples, when I'm doing premarital counseling, that Family Worship should begin on the night of your wedding. Set the Lord first as the priority, and then establish the habit and pattern of maintaining that Family Worship throughout the duration of your lives.

MAURICE ROBERTS

Well, if a young married couple were looking for my advice, I would say to them, as soon as you begin your married life together, make this your practice: to say grace before meals, and morning and evening, to have Family Worship, and the Family Worship order should be that the husband, who is the head of the family, has the responsibility of reading a chapter or a passage of the Bible, and then conduct a little act of singing the Psalms, and then he offers prayer. And this should be their regular practice as man and wife. And when the husband is away from home, when children come along, that if the husband isn't there for any reason, as his duty is away from home, then the wife takes the Family Worship, and she educates the children. So the children respect the fact that both their parents are leading them to the knowledge of God.

GAVIN BEERS

Newly married couples should begin Family Worship immediately, for a very simple reason—they're a family. Indeed, a couple who are courting and preparing for marriage should feel very comfortable reading the Bible together and praying with one another. It's very important to start your marriage out upon a firm foundation, to begin as you mean to continue. And sometimes you may be tempted to think, Well, we'll get to Family Worship further down the road at another time. And somehow there's this idea even that we're not really a family until the children come. Well, you are a family. And what you will find is that, if and when children come, it will be increasingly difficult to regulate your family time and your Family Worship. You're going to have even more pressures, you're going to have less time, and therefore, lay the foundation of Family Worship at the beginning of your marriage. Something else—the Bible tells us that you are heirs together of the grace of life. So what better way would there be to express that, but by husband and wife coming together in this co-heir relationship before the Lord Jesus Christ, and to join together from the very beginning of their marriage in Family Worship?

YOUNG ONES

MICHAEL SPANGLER

It is an art to adapt Family Worship to the different seasons of life. Now we've not had teenagers, older children, but we have had varying stages from infancy up to six years old, and it's been different in each time. You have to be understanding, but you also have to understand that worship is more important than the particular troubles of the child. So when we only had a little baby, you know, we'd do all we can that he wouldn't interrupt or hinder our Family Worship, even though we were very understanding. So it may mean that some Family Worship had to happen during his naptimes, because he wasn't yet able to sit with us, but as soon as he was able to sit with us, even for a few minutes, we'd use those minutes well, and we'd slowly and graciously, and according to his ability, train him to be able to sit longer. And when he was old enough, that would involve correction, even corporal punishment, as a way to show the great seriousness, but also the duty that even little children have to worship God. I think we were always very gracious and loving to our children. But I think also, our children, now that they're older and are very capable of sitting still and benefiting from Family Worship, they would say that they learned to do that through that initial discipline. So I counsel parents, this is worthy of your time, your effort, your zeal, your discipline to train your children as soon as possible to sit through Family Worship. And it is possible. It is quite possible to have two-, three-, four-year-olds sitting still, benefiting from Family Worship, and I highly recommend it.

One adaptation that we have recently added to our Family Worship is in the singing of Psalms. It used to be that we just let the little children stay silent while we sang Psalms, because they couldn't read from the Psalter. But then I discovered that there's an historic practice when Psalm books were rare, just to read the line of the Psalm. And so that opened up for our toddlers, who can't yet read, the ability to sing Psalms with us. We read one line, then we all sing that line together; I read another line, and on and on.

GRAEME CRAIG

It's important to remember who is present at worship. As a minister, it would be strange if, in my preaching, and in every aspect of worship, I didn't take note of the congregation. If I just stood up there, not relating things to the congregation, that would seem weird. Is it young people? Is it older people? Are they unconverted? Are they mature Christians? Well, it's the same with family. We have to think of who's before us. If it's you and your wife and a couple of toddlers, then you have to try and relate things to them. You would perhaps pick a passage of Scripture to read that was historical or something from the life of Christ. You may wish to choose some simpler Psalms that you could repeat often with them. Because you want them to engage in worship. You're prayer—well, you want them to know that they are being prayed for. You mention their name, you mention their circumstances. You obviously, if it's teenagers, they are at a different stage in life. If you have the whole range of ages in one home, which I have known, you end up probably trying to apply things to everyone. You should ask a question of the toddler to see if they were listening, and you ask the teenager a slightly more difficult question to see if they were listening, as you try and apply the Scriptures. So we need to use sanctified common sense. We have to be aware that there are times and seasons of life when you may select passages. A time of bereavement would be a time to choose certain passages. A time of joy, perhaps other passages. Although in saying that, it is good to read through the whole sweep of Scripture. It is when you have particularly young

children, you may be less prone to do that. It's possible to get bogged down in the Book of Job, or Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and we have to be careful that we are not making our worship wearisome for really young children, and giving passages that they will struggle to benefit from.

GAVIN BEERS

There are key elements that you must include in Family Worship. You should read the Bible together, you should pray, and you should sing praise unto God. But sometimes circumstances place constraints upon you, and you may even modify your practice somewhat. For example, when your children are young, you can't read as much of the Bible as you are able to when your children are older. They're little children, they don't have the concentration span, and therefore, you have to be realistic. I have seen in the past, some people begin Family Worship with great enthusiasm, but they approach it almost as though it were an entire church service. And the result of that is, they exasperate their children, and in turn, they exasperate themselves. The problem was their expectations were, quite simply, too high. So you need to be realistic. Read a suitable portion of Scripture, of a suitable length for your family.

As you do so, engage with your children, so that you're serving them. You try to help them glean things from the Word of God. And so questions and answers upon the Word of God are very important. I remember, when my children were small, I would stop in the middle of the passage, and just put out a question to see if they were listening, or if they were daydreaming. If you sing the Psalms, then you could choose a particular Psalm, maybe a shorter Psalm, and sing that one Psalm repeatedly, so that even your younger children, who aren't able to read for themselves get the joy of being able to join in the singing of God's praise.

Another thing that you can do is engage your children, to ask them, from time to time, "What portion of the Bible they would like you to read?" or "What Psalm would you like us to sing?" Again, in my own experience, we found that if we come to the end of reading through a book of the Bible, then we will ask each member of the family to choose their reading before we go on to begin another book of the Bible. And the children, when they were young, they always enthusiastically wanted their portion, their choice to be read. And it's very insightful, because as you ask your children for a Bible portion to be read, you're also getting a little insight into how they're thinking, and maybe what parts of the Bible are precious to them.

ROBERT McCURLEY

It would be ridiculous to fail to recognize that there's great diversity within a family's development. There are various stages in which the family grows. And so you have babies, and you have toddlers, and you have young children, and you have adolescents, and young adults, and so on, that comprise the family at various stages of its development. And so we need to pitch Family Worship to those in our homes at those various stages. So for example, when we have little children, we're going to simplify. We may abbreviate what is done in Family Worship, but we'll certainly simplify what it is that's being communicated to them. John Calvin has this illustration of a father sitting at the head of his table, and he carves off meat for the family. And he shaves off little pieces suitable to those who are young, and bigger pieces to those who are older, and so on. And that illustration is applicable to Family Worship. We need to give food that is suitable to the condition of all of those that are in our family. Now that does not mean reductionism. That does not mean reducing everything to absolute simplicity, or dumbing everything down. After all, your wife is still there, and so she needs food as well. There needs to be things that are communicated to her

that would be suitable to her own circumstances. You may have older children as well as younger children, and to each we need to give the Word of God in ways that will be digestible by them.

IAN MACLEOD

When we have young children with us in Family Worship, then this should be seen as a great encouragement for us to bring them to the Word of God. Now of course, people recognize that there is a difficulty—the language might be hard, the concepts might be hard. But yet, I think it's good to remember that even when children do not understand everything that is read, or sung, or prayed, yet very deep impressions are being formed in their young hearts and lives. And we should remember also that children are able to take in a lot more than we realize. And yet it's true, when we have young children, we should adapt to the capacities of the young children. We can ask questions at their level. We can ask them what they heard about God, what did they hear about Christ, what did they hear about sin, what did they hear about the way of salvation. We can also adapt the time. We don't want to be overly long with Family Worship when our children are young. We certainly want it to be something that they look forward to, something that they enjoy, a place where they feel welcome. And I think too, it's important for fathers, or whoever is reading the Scripture, to do so, not only with reverence—that is certainly required—but also with enthusiasm, to read it with our hearts, to take care how we read the Scripture.

WILLIAM MACLEOD

I think it's important to remember the different children, different members of the family are present. It can be very difficult when children are very young, but even with little toddlers, if we can try to get them to perhaps focus on a picture, or a word from the passage, try to get them to think about what we are reading. And then, as they get older, ask questions at Family Worship, and in that way, attention is drawn to the passage. And I think it is good too that the children, and indeed all, be encouraged to read, to help in the reading, so to read one or two verse each, around the family in Family Worship. And that helps to keep concentration on what we are doing, in worshipping God.

TIPS FOR FATHERS

GAVIN BEERS

One piece of advice to fathers leading Family Worship would be to keep it simple. It's not always easy for you to understand in great depth any passage of Scripture that you might read before your family. And that can be intimidating. But for your encouragement, it's not always easy for pastors or elders to understand that passage of Scripture either. The danger is that as you lead your family, you begin to feel overwhelmed. What am I going to say about this passage to my family? Well, you can do a few things that will help you. Go to the passage with some basic questions. Ask, is there a sin in this passage that I can highlight to my children? Is there a duty that God commands? Is there a word of comfort that's applicable to us as a family? Is there anything that teaches us particularly about guidance? What does the passage say about God? What can I learn from this passage about the Lord Jesus Christ? You don't need to expound the whole of the passage in detail to be able to apply simple lessons to your family. So keep it simple, and draw important words of application from that portion for your household.

GRAEME CRAIG

We need to first apply the Scripture to ourself, and as we do that, then we're able to apply it to others. We need to be aware of our own spiritual health. So it's, as we are watching ourselves, we will be able to look after others. There's a sense in which we should seek to prepare ourself for leading Family Worship each day. You would expect a minister to prepare before he leads devotions in public. Well, that's true, in a sense, of a father as well, or indeed a mother, if the father is absent. When it comes to applying the Word and making comments, one thing I would say is, we mustn't become tedious. I've known people who have read out chunks of well-known commentaries, like Matthew Henry's commentary. Good stuff—I don't know if it was written to be read, that's one problem. And it's very easy to read too big a chunk. So we have to be careful, if we were going to use helps, how we use them. But it's good for us to stop, and to think, and to try and ask the questions, and make the comments which would be helpful. It might be a case of selecting just one verse, or one incident. Focus on that. And another time you might focus on something else—something you understand, and are able to apply in a relevant way, in the situation the family is in. The one thing that mustn't happen is that you end up preaching a sermon. That's enough to put anyone off, and that's the last thing we want our children to have to suffer.

WILLIAM MACLEOD

If possible, it's good for fathers to read the passage beforehand, and to think about it, so that they're prepared. If there are difficult things in the passage, it's good to use Bible commentaries, like Matthew Henry—one of these Bible commentaries that would help to explain these difficult things. So if possible, and if time permits, use commentaries, which will help to explain a passage.

ROBERT McCURLEY

The best counsel for fathers is to begin by learning in their private worship. So when you come to the Word of God in private worship, you should come with questions. What does this passage show me about who God is? What does it reveal about Christ? What does it reveal to me about the nature of the gospel? How does it address my particular circumstances? In what ways does it apply to how I'm thinking, or how I'm emoting? What are the applications to the actions and attitudes within my own daily life? And all of those questions and reflections create material for others to benefit from. And so, having learned to do this in "the closet" if you will, we come to Family Worship, we read a passage of Scripture, and those same questions are lurking in the background of our minds. And we're able to come to the children and to our wives, and say, therefore, "Think about the implications of this passage in this area of your lives", or "in our life together as a family." "Think of how this addresses particular sins that we're struggling with in this home." "Think about how these promises apply to areas of uncertainty and need in our circumstances." "Think about how this gives us guidance and wisdom on the direction we should take as a family" in a given area. And we could multiply examples like that.

IAN MACLEOD

So some practical suggestions for fathers, as they try to make edifying comments for both their wife and for their children in Family Worship. It's certainly very beneficial if the father, even for a short time before Family Worship, can read the passage of Scripture that is to be read. And the father can pray over it. The father can pray, "Open mine eyes that of thy law the wonders I may see. Give to me that I may give to them." And so if the father is able to go over the passage, even

a little, prayerfully, before Family Worship, this will be very beneficial indeed. And some other helps that I have found—there is the RHB Study Bible,¹ which has some excellent thoughts, and questions, and discussion points at the end of each chapter. It also explains difficult words and concepts. And this is a tremendous help for fathers in Family Worship. It's also good to think of questioning the text, especially questions like, "What does this passage tell us about God?" "What does this question tell us about yourselves?" "What does this question tell us about Christ and the way of salvation in him?"

MAURICE ROBERTS

Well I would say the big thing here is, fathers must learn to use simple words which the children can understand, and to concentrate on the most important things. For instance, you don't start talking to children about very deep, difficult doctrines. These come later in life. So the parents, in my opinion, when they are conducting Family Worship, they should use simple words, simple language, and if you ask the children, "Now, my dear, did you understand what's meant by the words we're reading there? Tell me what you didn't understand, and I'll try to explain it." And get the children to make their own contribution. And in that way, the children realize that it's important to the parents that the children are understanding. And it's not just something where the children have no real place. And Jesus makes this very clear, doesn't he? "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." We should love children, and that's the heart of it all. When teaching children, they must first of all know that we love them, care for them, pray for them, and want them to come to heaven at last.

Perhaps I should add a little footnote here. Family Worship, I believe, ought not to be too long. It's not for me to say how long. But if anybody asks me the question, What's an ideal sort of length of time for the Family Worship in the morning and evening, I would tend to say, a quarter of an hour at the most. Now some people make it half an hour, perhaps more than that, and I'm afraid if you make a thing too much, too long, then you are going to strain the children, and they will resent it. And when they grow up, they will say, "Ha! We didn't like it. It was far too long, and we were glad when it was over." So we have to be careful. The Puritans had a saying, "Overdoing leads to undoing." If we overdo anything, we will damage it, so a nice little ten minutes, quarter of an hour, morning and evening, and do it gently with love, quietly, and kindly. I believe that is the best way to take your Family Worship.

MICHAEL SPANGLER

For fathers to edify their wives and children, you have to always practice a godly condescension, which is just like what God does for us. He's high in heaven, but he comes down to our level, shown especially in how Christ took flesh—the Son of God took flesh and dwelt among us. And we want to do the same for our children. We don't want to talk over them. We want to speak to them, according to their ability and their needs. That takes great humility, it takes great practice. Not all dads will be good at it at first, but it's something worth working on.

Some helps I have found—one is to make sure that you know the passage relatively well. It doesn't mean you study for an hour for every Family Worship, but it could mean that, especially at first. An easy way to make that happen is to make your private worship focus on the same text or texts that you'll have later in the day, in Family Worship. Or, you could do it a few days in advance.

1 Reformed Heritage KJV Study Bible, (Reformed Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2014).

And using an excellent whole Bible commentary, like Matthew Henry, is a good help. Even today, I read Matthew Henry for the Psalm, and I used his outline, and some of his points of application. I'm a minister of the gospel, and I'm thankful for that help. I recommend it. You should use all the help you can get, as a dad, to understand the text, in order to apply it. I think it's important that Family Worship, even in a way different than public worship, because you're not preaching, it's much more informal, just because of the nature of you're in the family, it's to ask lots of questions, to try to draw out from the child, from your wife, from any others present, their understanding, and their application of the text. I think it's important to engage as closely as possible, and for many people to be speaking in Family Worship, even while the dad is leading.

A LAST WORD FOR FATHERS

GAVIN BEERS

My advice to fathers who are thinking about Family Worship is, start immediately. But start with realistic expectations, that this is not something that's just going to come naturally and automatic to you or to your household. You know that spiritual duties require God's grace. And the best thing that you could do is to become convinced of the principle of Family Worship. Become convinced of the principle, and let that principle then become a conviction. Many times over the years, I've heard people talk about Family Worship. They seem to be enthusiastic. They have an opinion about it. They believe it's a good thing. But yet that opinion doesn't hold them. It doesn't come with "follow through." So, sit down before the Lord, and develop the conviction that God requires this of you. And it's that conviction that will compel you to do it. And the same conviction will also hold you to it when things get difficult. It will stop you picking up the practice, then dropping it again, feeling guilty, and beginning it anew. It will help you to be consistent and regular, day after day, week after week, month after month. I would also speak to wives and mothers. If your husband is struggling to lead your family in worship, be determined to be an encouragement to him. Encourage him to take the lead. And if he's finding it difficult, don't try to help him by taking the lead yourself. Let him struggle on, encourage him to be the head of his household, and to guide his family in the ways of the Lord.

GRAEME CRAIG

Well, it's not a question of, "Will I do it?" It's a case of, "This is your duty—you should be doing it." You are worse than an infidel, if you are not doing it, according to 1 Timothy 5:8. And you're in breach of your covenant with God. God's covenant is to you and your children. And if you're a covenant family, and there's promises to bless you and your children, then you must bring the things of God before you and your children. He expects you to instruct them and direct them in the ways of God. And so, this is your duty. Begin to fulfill that duty.

We have to be resolved. We have to see the benefits of it. And if you're resolved to do it, and you've seen the benefits of doing it, if you see examples of how to do it, then begin it. Don't let busyness or an awkwardness put you off. It's difficult to do many things in life. Sometimes you've just got to do it. Giving an interview is not something I would naturally want to do. You do it, and as you do it, you begin to get more relaxed about your doing of these things. So I would implore any fathers, or indeed mothers, who are thinking of beginning Family Worship, to do it. I would remind you of Eli, the priest, of how he failed to really discipline and direct his sons who followed

in the priesthood after him. Remember what happened to them. You don't want that for your children. Do it.

And it may be you're in a flat somewhere and you're worried about disturbing your neighbors. Well, don't be worried. They often disturb you. If they disturb you with their music or their television, you disturb them with your singing the praise of God. And it's a witness to your family, it's a witness to your neighbors. Don't dim the light of truth in your home. Let it be a beacon shining out to others around you that you love the Lord, and you want others, especially your family to love him and to walk in his ways.

MICHAEL SPANGLER

If you're a father contemplating starting Family Worship, my message would be simple: *Just do it*. Start today. You don't have to be fancy. Just pray with your family. That's a good start to Family Worship. And then, open the Bible. I trust, if you're a Christian, that you can open the Bible, and you can communicate to your children something of value for their souls. And I'd say, *Just do it*. Don't have great dreams about having hour-long Family Worship three times a day—at least, not at first. But start simply, and make it a habit, and then pray that the Lord would bless that habit, and give you success in it. And I am confident that if you trust the Lord, and apply yourself to it, he will bless you, and you will be very encouraged.

WILLIAM MACLEOD

I think the important thing is not to be too ambitious. There are some fathers, and they start off perhaps having a Family Worship that lasts an hour. Now you just can't keep that up. It's better to have a Family Worship that lasts five minutes, and is kept going regularly, morning and evening. And so don't be too ambitious, but lay down the law for yourself and your family that you keep Family Worship. And read God's word, start reading, you can read in the morning in Genesis, and read through the Old Testament in the mornings. In the evenings, you could read through the New Testament. And in that way, as your children grow up, you will have read through the Bible several times, and the children will know the Bible. It will be beneficial for yourself, and it will also be very beneficial for your family.

MAURICE ROBERTS

Well, I would say, point number one, if I am talking to a man who is the head of a family, to make sure, first of all, that he is a true Christian—that he is truly born again, that's he's had the experience of being spiritually changed. If a man is merely a nominal Christian, I would have to say to him, Well, you should take Family Worship, reading the Bible, and praying, but above all, you must make it your number one duty in life to pray to God for forgiveness, and for mercy, and the experience of the new birth. Because only then will your influence as a father in the family be what ideally it needs to be, to bring the children into experience the grace of God. But if it's a Christian person that I'm talking to, I would say, Well, let nothing discourage you from this, because the most important way you can influence your family to get to heaven, and to live a godly life, will be in morning and evening, every day, that they hear you reading of a passage of the Bible, and praying, and singing a little of the Psalms.

ROBERT McCURLEY

I would encourage fathers to beware of the paralysis of analysis. We can overthink things, or we can approach Family Worship with the idea that we have to have everything sorted, we have

to have everything perfect before we actually launch. And that's a foolish way of approaching this matter. As you should know, priorities are what we do. And so it's far better to just begin. And it may be that, at first, it's rather rough, and there are many imperfections that you recognize. Well, that's fair enough. You can improve, you can change, you can develop the practice of Family Worship as time goes on. Indeed you will. Inescapably you will continue to mature in the practice of Family Worship. But you need to, first of all, begin. *Just do it.* Sit the family down and say, "We're going to set apart time every day for the worship of God." And you can sing a Psalm, and you can read a passage of Scripture, and you can make, perhaps, only a few comments initially. Gather the family for prayer, and so on. All of that can grow, and eventually flourish. But nothing's going to happen until you begin. And so rather than trying to get everything sorted and perfect before you begin, you should start. Start today, and then improve as time goes on.

IAN MACLEOD

So if we have a message for fathers today who are either considering beginning, or hopefully continuing with Family Worship, then we would say that if this is not something that you are doing, then we would urge you to repent of this, to begin it today, to go to your wife, to go to your children to ask for forgiveness for not doing this. You go to the Scriptures, you find that this is something that is required, especially at the heads of homes, then this is something that we all ought to be doing. And really to try to commend it to them in a positive way, we are coming here in our home before the Lord Almighty, before the covenant God, who is full of mercy, full of grace, who is always willing to hear the cries of his people. And we as a family are going to come before him. What a tremendous privilege this is! What tremendous blessings families can expect when they worship God in their homes morning and evening!

The Puritans used to say that a family without prayer is like a house without a roof—exposed to all the storms of heaven. And so, put the roof on. Put the protection on your home. Begin today to pray with your families, and I trust with God's blessing, you will know the great joy and the great blessing that it brings to you, as well as to your children, that they would set their hope in God, and that they then would tell generations following to trust in this God, who is our God forever.

I would say I never feel more at home than when I am worshiping God with my family. Reading his word, singing his praise, praying to the Lord, praying with our children, I never feel more at home. And as one man said, I never feel more manly than when I am leading my family in worship. We need godly homes. We need godly fathers, who are going to open their Bible, who are going to read it, sing it, pray it, with the hope, the expectation, and the prayer that our children will set their hope in God, and that for generations following, we will trust in this God, who is our God forever.