

# How to Create a Kingdom Culture in Your Home

January 15, 2017

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*How to Create a Kingdom Culture in Your Home.* There are some ambiguities in that title that I want to clarify before we really begin. By “kingdom culture” we mean a home whose attitudes, values, and lifestyle practices honor Jesus as the King of the house and have glorifying him as the central uniting purpose.

As we said last week, *you cannot bring the kingdom of God to your home until Jesus is King of your heart.* You can live in a kingdom home without Jesus as king of your heart as seen in many children of these homes who as adults reject Jesus. You can also follow Christian principles for marriage and parenting and not have Jesus as your king. Common grace will add blessing to it. But a true kingdom home requires the prevailing purpose and values of the home to flow out of the hearts of the home in mutual submission to Jesus as King and faith in him as Savior.

Last week we looked at some key cultural indicators of a home that is intentionally creating kingdom culture at home. Here is a quick review.

- **His kingdom is the first priority**

*"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."* (Matthew 6:33 ESV)

- **Self-giving love is the norm**
- **Dignity and respect for others**
- **Order and peace**
- **Morality and obedience**
- **Grace**

That's what it should look like but how do we practically get there? Assuming Jesus is King of our hearts, how do we enthrone him as King of our homes?

Let's set that question aside a moment. Let's just ask, how do you make anything the most important thing of your home? Many people don't intentionally make something important; it becomes the primary thing naturally because it's really important to the parents of the house. So if the parents are big into education, there are books everywhere and the alphabet is up in the kid's room, and there are pictures of Harvard and Yale on the fridge. If the single woman is into pets, let's say cats, then you walk into the home and there are not only cats, but jungle gyms for the cats to play on, books about cats on the shelf, and catnip under the sofa.

Or let's say it's a Cubs house. The cultural value of the home is the Cubs. How is that established and lived out? The Cubs are talked about a lot at home. When's the next game? How are we doing? The roster is memorized. The stats are followed. The history of the team is well known. Cubs' wins are celebrated. Cubs' losses are mourned. They are public with their support. They fly the W. They identify with the team with bumper stickers and jerseys. Their heroes are the players who are successful for the team. They love to go to games and be with other Cubs fans. They play baseball with their neighbors. Wrigley Field is sacred. When they get with other Cubs fans, they enjoy the camaraderie and talking about their

team. They sing Cubs songs. Their children grow up Cubs fans and carry that allegiance on to the grandkids. Their home reflects their heart's values. If you spend time in the home, you leave thinking, *there's no doubt that family loves the Cubs!*

So if this was a message entitled, *How to Create a Cubs Culture at Home*, we would fairly easily know how to enthrone the Cubs as your big deal at home.

When it comes to Christianity in a home, we get confused because we think the mechanisms of creating home culture must be substantially different from these other more familiar secular pursuits. They are much more similar than we realize, which should be an encouragement; this is much more doable than you may think.

So why is it easy to be an education, cats, or Cubs culture home and creating Christian culture at home seems so challenging? Because the world, the flesh, and the devil cheer any culture in your home except a God one. Internally there's no resistance at all to other values. Gardening. Hockey. Stamps. Cars. Deer hunting. But the moment we resolve inside to make any spiritual change at home, something inside us resists. That something is our sin nature. Paul says in Romans 7:21, "*When I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.*" What I'm going to share today will not appeal to any of our sin nature—mine included. There will be an internal lawyer arguing vociferously against making any changes at all and you will hear his argument all the way home today.

God is stronger, but this requires us to yield to him and not to the familiar, or the way we were raised, or the way it's always been, or the comfortable. Resist your resistance.

### **How to Create Kingdom Culture in Your Home**

*The kingdom of God is the reign of God through Christ.* Jesus is the King of the universe. The goal of a kingdom home is to honor the King by aligning the values of the home with the values of the King. Culture is shaped over time, so none of these are silver bullets. Pick a few of them to focus on this week or this month. Bend the culture slowly over time.

### **Talk to the King (prayer)**

I begin with this one because it is the easiest and most powerful cultural shift mechanism. Prayer is when we talk to our King. Don't get too caught up in your Trinitarianism here. We can talk to each member of the Trinity and collectively as the one true God.

The point is that prayer is inherently a submission to the Lordship of Jesus. It demotes us and promotes Jesus. It brings the soul into awareness of the authority and majesty of God. It does the same for the family in the home. When family members pray together, they are collectively affirming that there is a higher authority around here than us.

Are there regular family times when you could create a habit of prayer? Here are some suggestions:

- Meals
- Bedtime
- New day
- Big day
- Big sorrow/need
- Pre-Sunday worship

*"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."* (Ephesians 6:18 NIV)

I know of no easier way to introduce kingdom culture into a home than for the people of the home to regularly talk to the King in prayer.

### **Listen to the King (Scripture)**

How does our king speak to us? Our King speaks through his written Word to us. The Bible will have a prominent and revered place in a kingdom home. *"These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word."* (Isaiah 66:2)

You want a culture in your home where reading and knowing the Bible is normal. Parents, do your kids see you reading the Bible having personal times with God? Those images make very powerful impressions. That might be reason alone to have a printed Bible instead of the digital one on your phone. They don't know if you are listening to God or texting Aunt Mabel.

Where do you start? Use age-appropriate children's books like:

- *First Catechism* by Great Commission Publications
- *The Big Picture Story Bible* by David Helm
- *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones
- *Old Story New and Long Story Short* by Marty Machowski
- Our Kids' Ministry provides weekly family devotional guides called *Table Talk* and *TAG Time*.

Make Scripture prominent. Maybe that is a chalkboard with the verse of the week. Maybe it's Scripture songs and music. Pandora and Amazon music have whole channels of Scripture playlists you can stream for free. The King talks to his people through his Word.

### **Talk about the King (spiritual conversations)**

*"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."* (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 ESV)

Talking to our family members happens naturally. Having spiritual content to those conversations doesn't. God knew this and made it a command in Israel. We can talk about the weather all we want, but bring up something spiritual and you get...crickets. Kingdom culture requires kingdom conversations. Not only is it an opportunity to teach our children, but the conversation itself elevates the culture of the home toward the things of God.

How often do you talk about spiritual things? Talk about what God's doing in your life or our church? How often did you talk about it this past week?

Use *The Deuteronomy Drip Principle*. Most of us don't feel qualified to carry on an hour-long conversation on justification or missions in Africa. What Deuteronomy encourages is the drip principle. Drip. Drip. Drip. Everywhere you go, whenever possible, drip spiritual content into your daily conversations. Pray. Make God and God-talk as easy and normal as Cubs fans

talk about the Cubs, and even more. Regularly asking each other questions that get to spiritual conversation is important. Here are some examples:

- Has God been teaching you anything new lately?
- What is one thing you prayed about today?
- What do you hope to do or learn this year?
- How did you help someone today, and how did someone help you?
- What's the biggest thing you are trusting God for right now?<sup>1</sup>
- What was your takeaway from the Sunday sermon?

Get the ball rolling with each other by asking questions that take everyday conversations into spiritual categories.

Here's another Old Testament tip: have spiritual mementos around the house and make them legendary. *"And he said to the people of Israel, 'When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.'"* (Joshua 4:21-22)

Let me give you an example of this. I have had a large, flat, smooth rock in my home office for many years. One day, Kiralee comes in and she says, "What's this rock for?" I said, "Well, sweetheart, some years ago, Daddy was very, very discouraged and was questioning lots of things in his life. And I was walking along Lake Michigan and I saw this very smooth stone and I picked it up and the thought came to me, *how did this stone get so smooth?* For thousands of years there were many, many collisions and it made the stone really smooth and I thought, *that's what God is doing in this trial in my life right now.* So I kept the rock, sweetheart."

She *loves* this rock. In fact, yesterday I said, "Sweetheart, can you go get Daddy's stone?" (She keeps it in her bedroom now.) And she said, "Maybe when you're done, I can borrow it again?" She probably asks me every other day, "What does the stone mean?"

So in your home have things around that act as prompters of truth like a picture of you getting baptized or a picture of someone who discipled you on the fridge or things that prompt you to say, "Sweetheart, Daddy was a sinner but he came to Jesus and he is so glad that he did." You want to make Jesus the central reference point of your home. Does everybody in your home know how you became a Christian? How God has worked in your life and whom he used to do it? Make God's work in your life legendary. It makes Jesus the hero of your story and home.

I also want to encourage a regular time of family worship. Have a time in your family rhythm when you create a focus on God. In our family, we do this in the morning. Your rhythm may be different. Have everyone sit down and read through a gospel or the stories of David or whatever. Process a little. Then pray. Pray for your home and use kingdom language. *Jesus, we want to honor you today. Jesus, may you be pleased today by the way we serve you and each other.* The prayers serve as reminders of how healthy Christians treat their family members and reinforce kingdom values in your home. Don't get preachy in your prayers; your kids will suspect the prayer was for them and not God.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommended in <http://www.focusonthefamily.ca/parenting/mealtime-questions>

## **Worship the King**

God has made the human body with regular rhythms. Sleep. Eat. Drink. Spiritually, we set aside the first day of the week as a Sabbath. A rest. A day of worship. I think the best way to infuse and maintain a kingdom culture in your home is weekly corporate worship with other Christians. Go to Wrigley, sing the songs, fly the W, celebrate the Cubs... No. I mean go to church. Sing the songs. Celebrate Jesus together. Listen to God's Word preached like your spiritual lives depend on it. Do that every Sunday and prioritize it over everything else. Why? The kingdom of God is to be sought first and the clearest and easiest way to install a kingdom-first priority is to prioritize worship of the King.

Our souls need the regular interaction with God's people and God's Word proclaimed. How will your kids get the idea that the kingdom of God is more important than the kingdom of man? When the kingdom-of-man priorities are observed to be less important in your home than the kingdom-of-God ones. Can children grow up going to church regularly and reject Jesus as adults? Sure they can. One way you can help them reject it is by modeling for them a lifestyle that doesn't seek the kingdom first.

## **Serve the King**

*"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (Mark 10:45)

I won't spend too much time here but will simply note that a kingdom home is a home where serving the King by serving his people is valued. Take your kids with you and serve the Lord together. I know the impression I got over the years as my dad hauled me here and there doing ministry things. He was a deacon in the church and I was the deacon to the deacon. Guess what I do full-time now? Serve the King together.

## **Celebrate what the King celebrates**

*"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."* (Philippians 4:8 ESV)

God is re-creating through Christian homes the family as God intended it to be in creation. This means that sin and the effects of sin are not promoted or celebrated. A kingdom family celebrates what the King celebrates. All the qualities in Philippians are what Jesus is like. He is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, excellent. Heaven celebrates Jesus and a Christian family should as well.

So profanity is not tolerated because Jesus is King here and his name is holy. We promote the good and the lovely, not the violent, crude, and immoral. Some homes allow the culture to trend toward things of our lower nature, so everything is sophomoric humor about body functions and words with double meanings. The culture of the conversation is crass and crude and banal. That's the way the world is. Everything's snickering and sarcasm delighting in the rude and the crude.

But Jesus is beautiful beyond description, *"Beautiful Savior! Lord of all the nations! Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, praise adoration, now and forevermore, be Thine."* (*Fairest Lord Jesus*) When the beautiful King presides in your home, with him comes valuing goodness and beauty. Harmony and order. Fill your homes with what is good. Make your entertainment choices morally uplifting. Celebrate what Jesus celebrates.

*"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving." (Ephesians 5:3-4 NIV)*

*"Hate what is evil; cling to what is good." (Romans 12:9)*

The Christian calendar provides great opportunities to use traditions for culture-shaping. Make Christmas about Jesus and keep him in the forefront—not Santa or presents or decorations. Make Easter in your home about the resurrection and not about clothes and bunnies and eggs. There is room for varying practices here. I just think Christmas should be about Jesus' incarnation and Easter about his resurrection. Build traditions in your home that highlight and reinforce the gospel of Jesus at home.

Let's review. How do we create kingdom culture at home? We regularly....

- **Talk to the King**
- **Listen to the King**
- **Talk about the King**
- **Worship the King**
- **Serve the King**
- **Celebrate what the King celebrates**

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