

Show piety at home

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“...Show piety at home...” (1 Tim. 5:4)

You’ve heard the expression, “A devil at home, a saint abroad.” It describes the horrible tendency to be gracious and outgoing to those in the outside world and yet be harsh and unkind at home.

This is a failing that is not confined to any particular class of people. Young people have to guard against it. It’s so easy to be a TV personality with one’s peers, yet be a terror to one’s parents. Husbands may maintain a charming front with their business associates, then when they come home, they turn off the charm and are their normal, irritable selves. Preachers may have a scintillating style in the pulpit and a rotten disposition in the family room.

It is one of the perverse streaks of our fallen state that we are sometimes meanest to those who are closest to us, who do the most for us, and who, in our saner moments, we love the best. Thus Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote:

One great truth in life I’ve found,
While journeying to the West;
The only folks we really wound
Are those we love the best.
We flatter those we scarcely know.
We please the fleeting guest,
And deal full many a
thoughtless blow
To those we love the best.

Another poet echoed these sentiments as follows: “We have greetings for the stranger and smiles for the guest, but oft for our own the bitter tone, though we love our own the best.”

“It is very easy to have a church religion, or a prayer-meeting religion, or a Christian-work religion; but it is altogether a different thing to have an everyday religion. To ‘show piety at home’ is one of the most vital parts of Christianity, but it is also one far too rare; and it is not at all an uncommon thing to find Christians who ‘do their righteousness’ before outsiders ‘to be seen of men,’ but who fail lamentably in showing their piety at home. I knew a father of a family who was so powerful in prayer at the weekly prayer meeting, and so impressive in exhortation that the whole church was edified by his piety; but who, when he went home after the meetings, was so cross and ugly that his wife and family were afraid to say a word in his presence.” (H.W. Smith).

Samuel Johnson said, “Every animal revenges his pains upon those who happen to be near.” Man should avoid this natural tendency.

What we are at home is a truer index of our Christian character than what we are in public.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/show-piety-at-home/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net