

THE FAMILY ALTAR

A devotional of CDA Orlando



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Letter from Pastors Victor and Lisa Rosario

Parent or family leader:

Blessings, from our family, the Rosario Pastoral family, we want to welcome you to our devotional, titled REBUILDING THE FAMILY ALTAR, written by Pastor Victor M. Rosario. This is a 15-minute daily family devotional, intended to help unite us and direct us toward a focus on God's plan to shape our lives, as a family.

Many families live under one roof, but they do not share the things of God together. Parents are busy, tired and the children are occupied with their school work, jobs or the many distractions we have available today. Sad to say, families are divided. Even though some go to church together, even there, the family is split. For example, adults are in the main sanctuary, the youth go to their program and children to children's church.

So, I felt an obligation to write a 7-day devotional to bring spiritual unity back to the family. Thank you for trusting us and making yourself available to let God minister to his family through his word.

The way these talks are designed to work is that the parent or family leader reads the material first, then gathers their family, and ministers the devotional every day. It doesn't have to be the same time every day, but it should be consecutive days for a week. It starts on a Sunday and ends on a Saturday.

First, let us choose a time and place where all of us, family members, can be present for our FAMILY ALTAR, without fail.

Secondly, we need our tools:

1. Bibles (A common and easy-to-understand version for your youth and children)
2. A worship song, ready to be heard each day as the Lord leads.
3. A plan to meet a community need (See Friday section), the last day, Saturday and plans for the same Saturday, then have the family celebration, to celebrate the completion of our FAMILY ALTAR. Let's plan a special and memorable time.



SUNDAY

REBUILDING THE FAMILY ALTAR

For Sunday, plan your introduction to your family devotional, by preparing a special family gathering, preferably a dinner, at home or at a restaurant. Be prepared to declare to your family your interest in doing a family project together. Tell them it's called **Building The Family Altar**.

Present it with enthusiasm and make mention of the big family celebration on Saturday. Pray to God for wisdom and ask for His help in preparing everyone's heart so a breakthrough can happen in your family. Remember the family that prays together, stays together. Ready for Monday.



MONDAY

1. PRAYER

Leader of the family, **start with an opening prayer** and ask God to visit your family today.

2. READ TODAY'S KEY BIBLE VERSES

1 Kings 18:30-32 MEV

"Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord came saying, "Israel shall be your name," and he built an altar in the name of the Lord with stones and he built an altar in the name of the LORD with stones, and he made a trench around the altar, so deep that it could contain two seahs of seed.

Verse. 36-38

"At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "The LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and that I have done all these things at Your word. 37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, so that this people may know that You are the LORD God and that You have turned their hearts back again." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench."

3. READ THE DEVOTIONAL

In Verse 30 *Elijah said to all the people,*

"Come near to me." The main character in this story is the prophet Elijah, who faced a great challenge in representing the true and living God. Today, God is challenging us to come near and come together, as a family and to witness His presence in our lives. Elijah was challenged to ask his God to respond to him, by sending fire upon the altar before him. The first thing we need to do is come closer together, in our seeking God, as a family.

As a family, how important is it to come together to read the Bible and to seek God's presence?

Continuing in verse 30: And he repaired the altar of the Lord which had been broken down. The altar that Elijah was going to use to call upon God's presence to come down with fire was broken and a disaster. Our family altar needs to stand tall, united, and ready to receive what God has for all of us.

First, He wants to bless us with His love through His Son, Jesus, who through Him, we can have salvation from the price of our sins and allow us to reach heaven. Second, Jesus died on the cross, so that we can have the peace and healing of him in our lives. Today, we can rebuild our family altar and make it worthy of God's presence.

What things are broken in our family that can help us repair our altar and prepare it to attract the presence of God to our family?

Verse 37 and 38 *"Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that these people may know that you are the Lord God, and that you have turned their hearts again. Then the fire of the Lord fell..."*

God is very interested in you, opening your hearts to Him today and every day. He will always be at the door of his heart and knock and He will never force himself to enter. If he opens his heart and asks Him to come in, He will come in and you will be able to feel the joy that only He can provide.

What does it mean to you to open your heart to God and what does it feel like to feel God's presence within you?

Verse 37 and 38 Hear me, O Lord, hear me, so that this people may know that You are the Lord God and that **You have turned their hearts back again.** **Then the fire of the Lord fell...** God is very interested in you, opening your hearts to Him today and every day. He will always stand at the door of your heart and knock and He will never force himself in. If you open your heart and ask Him in, He will come in and you can feel the joy that only He can provide.

What does it mean to you to open your heart to God and have you ever experienced His joy?

4. TIME OF WORSHIP

One of the ways we can attract God's presence is through worshiping together. Let's invite God's presence into our FAMILY ALTAR through a worship song. **Play a worship song** and take a time of worship and meditate together.

5. FAMILY PRAYER

Where everyone prays out loud and the family leader finishes by praying for God's help in rebuilding a FAMILY ALTAR that can meet everyday this week.



TUESDAY

GOD'S WORD IS FOR US TODAY

1. PRAYER

Leader of the family, start with an opening prayer, asking God to visit your family today. Make sure you have **Sticky Notes** [™] ready to pass out at the end of the devotional for everyone.

2. READ TODAY'S KEY BIBLE VERSES

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

1 "Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, so that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2 so that you might fear the Lord your God in order to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you—you, and your son, and your grandson—all the days of your life, so that your days may be prolonged. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do it, so that it may be well with you and so that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord the God of your fathers has promised you in the land that flows with milk and honey" 4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God. The Lord is one! 5 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be in your heart. 7 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 up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

3. READ THE DEVOTIONAL

God's word is very important in our lives. If we were underwater it would be the oxygen tank that would keep us alive. If we were in a well built house, it would become the shelter during a hurricane, which would keep us safe. Have you ever walked through the woods at night or through a home when it's pitch black? It is very dark and very difficult to see where you are going. He taught us through the Bible, that we need to make His Word a light to help us walk through our path of life.

In **verse 1**: Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, so that you may observe them in the land which **you are crossing over to possess**...God wants us to get ready to cross over to something bigger in our lives as a family and the secret is in observing God's word. Take God's word and make sure you are drinking from it everyday. Why and what will I get from it? Continuing in the last part of **verse 1**: so that your days may be prolonged and in **verse 3**: Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do it, so that it may be well with you and so that you may multiply greatly.

God's word in our hearts and influencing us in how we think and in our actions will bring into your life some benefits. You will live longer, you will be healthier in your mind, body and spirit. Also, you will be multiplied, which means growth, increase and more. **In verse 5:** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **6** These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be in your heart. First God's word commands us to love God 100% with every part of ourselves and with all your strength.

How can I demonstrate to God that I truly love him?

In Verses 7: 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 up.

Whose responsibility is it to teach the children about God's word? When should our family speak about God's word?

In verse 8: You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. **9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.** One of the ways to grow in God's word is to write it and place it where you can see it and memorize it. There are promises in the Bible that can help us in difficult times, we can say there is a word of encouragement or a promise from God for every situation.

Does anyone here know a Bible verse from memory that has been a blessing in your life, can you share it outloud?

4. TIME OF WORSHIP

Play a worship song and take a time of worship and meditation together.

5. WRITE ON STICKY NOTES

Pass out sticky notes to everyone that can write and read and encourage them to write a Bible verse and to stick it on a mirror or on a door where they could read it and memorize it.

6. FAMILY PRAYER

End with a family prayer, where everyone prays out loud and the family leader finishes by praying for God's help in rebuilding a FAMILY ALTAR that can meet everyday this week.



WEDNESDAY

OBEDIENCE IS FOR EVERYONE

1. PRAYER

Leader of the family, start with an opening prayer, asks God to visit your family today.

2. READ TODAY'S KEY BIBLE VERSES

Ephesians 6:1

*"Children, **obey your parents** in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." 4 **Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger**, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

3. READ THE DEVOTIONAL

Ask everyone to answer this question: What does obedience mean to you?

In **verse 1** God teaches the children to obey their parents. In **verse 2** it talks about Honoring parents.

Does anyone know the definition of honor?

Honor means: high respect, recognize how important they are to you and that you value them greatly. In **verse 3** it tells us our reward for honoring our parents...we will live long lives. But what about **the parents**? Do they have to be obedient to someone? The answer is yes, they need to be obedient to God and his Word. In **verse 4** God says to the parents: **Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger**, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Two important rules for parents are:

1. They are supposed to speak to their children with love and understanding, showing patience
2. asking God to help them, to teach their children God's word and how to be--a good Christian.

Children have you been disobedient at times and dishonored your parents?

Talk about it. This is a good time to say you are sorry and that with God's help, you will try harder next time.

Parents have there been times you could have been more patient and spoken differently to your children?

This is a good time to share and to say sorry to your children if you feel convicted.

5. FAMILY PRAYER

End with a family prayer, where everyone prays out loud and the family leader finishes by praying.



THURSDAY

FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

1. PRAYER

Leader of the family, start with an opening prayer, ask God to visit your family today.

2. READ TODAY'S KEY BIBLE VERSES

Psalm 139:13 *"You brought my inner parts into being; You wove me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise you, **for You made me with fear and wonder; marvelous are Your works, and You know me completely.**"*

3. READ THE DEVOTIONAL

How many know that God created everyone of us?

Did God create everyone the same?

Are there two people in this world that are the same inside and out?

The Bible says in **verse 13** God is the creator of everyone of us and he made sure all of the parts inside my body work well together. Also, God wove us, which is like when a person does knitting or like a potter who forms a vase or a bowl with his hands. In **verse 14**: we were fearfully and wonderfully made. He took the time to make us and gave us every strength, characteristic and talent we have. The church is one body, even though, it has many different people. Another thing is, that those people have many different talents.

Parents what is your talent and tell everyone how you are using it for the Lord?

Everyone has a talent, which can be used for the Lord, ask the children what talents they have and how can they use it for God?

4. TIME OF WORSHIP

Play a worship song and take a time of worship and meditation together

5. FAMILY PRAYER

With one day left, end with a family prayer, where everyone prays out loud and the family leader finishes by praying for God's help in keeping the FAMILY ALTAR united and strong after this week.



FRIDAY

TRUE RELIGION

1. PRAYER

Leader of the family starts with an opening prayer asking God to visit your family today.

2. READ TODAY'S KEY BIBLE VERSES

James 1:27 *"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world."*

3. READ THE DEVOTIONAL

Ask, "What does religion mean to you?"

We can define religion by our service to God; how we choose to relate to Him. There are many religions, but not all of them lead to the only and real God, the God who revealed himself to us through His divine Book, the Bible.

In a time when there are many religions and so many beliefs, some good and most bad, we can define religion in this verse by saying, "The right Religion is our true worship, pure and that satisfies God's demands. We can make God happy in these things: by visiting the fatherless or orphans, those who have no parents, and the widows; those moms who have no husbands to support them in their difficult moments.

As a church we should look for and find a need and meet it with God's love through ourselves. Apart from these two groups of people that are in need, we can expand ourselves to be closer to God's heart and to help many people around our community that are in need.

What other people around us in our community need our help?

What people in our church could use our help?

Who in our families could use our help?

Last question: what are we as a family going to do to help them?

4. TIME OF WORSHIP

Play a worship song and worship together.

5. LET'S MAKE A FAMILY PROJECT

Let's find someone that as a family, we can help together. Let's take some time to get ideas and let's make a plan to practice Biblical religion. Include who, where, when (set a date, hopefully tomorrow Saturday, before our celebration) and how are we doing it.

Let everyone participate, for example if it is groceries to a single family home, then the whole family should go shopping and packing and making a homemade family card that everyone can sign and then go deliver together.

Be creative and remind people, "God put this in our hearts."

6. SPECIAL FAMILY PRAYER

Since today is your last day, **end with a family prayer**, where everyone prays out loud. Then finish with announcing the community outreach plan and the family celebration plans for Saturday. Prayerfully consider how to keep your family altar together. If this was a blessing to you please share with others.

God bless you and enjoy your FAMILY ALTAR CELEBRATION.



SATURDAY

PLAN FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH & FAMILY DINNER CELEBRATION

Wow, you did it. CDA and the Rosario Pastors, we congratulate you! What a great victory! Celebrate and let each member share something they have received from God. Wow, you have broken new ground and started a FAMILY ALTAR. **How can we continue to change our family culture and make this part of your family's DNA?** You can now meet once a week to continue your family altar.

Additionally, they can choose a day, once a month, or every other month when you can meet a need and do special outreach in their community. Include the entire family in planning and never be afraid to invite other families or family members to join your family team. In these times two things are being challenged, the integrity of the faith and the family unity, we will stay in touch. God bless you.

God bless you,

- Pastors Victor and Lisa Rosario