

FAMILY LIFE THAT WARMS THE HEART

Note to the speaker:

Show that close family relationships do not happen automatically but require time and effort. Instill confidence that problems can be solved by holding firmly to Bible principles. Do not present a delightful but unrealistic ideal; make the material realistic, practical

A HAPPY, WHOLESOME HOME IS WORTH STRIVING FOR (4 min.)

Families applying Bible principles, practicing true Christianity, are much happier and more wholesome than average (*w99* 1/1 3-5)

You may recognize areas where improvement is needed in your family—friction between members, needless problems, disagreements

God provided perfect advice in Bible to help us reach goal of warm, happy family

He is the Originator of marriage and knows what brings success and what leads to failure and unhappiness (Ge 1:28; 2:18, 22-24)

Will now discuss roles of husband, wife, children; how they can contribute to happy and wholesome home

Will also consider how to deal with some problems that might arise

AN UNSELFISH COUPLE, KEY TO A HAPPY HOME (12 min.)

Husband is assigned headship but should deal lovingly and unselfishly with his wife (*fy* 31-4)

As family head, he has weighty job of providing leadership and making major decisions

He is to 'assign his wife honor' (Read 1 Peter 3:7) (*g94* 10/8 19-21)

This contributes to a wife with a dignified standing (known for fine conduct and admirable qualities) who is a real credit, or "glory," to her husband (1Co 11:7)

Wife has a privileged standing with husband before God; still, she is subject to husband (Read 1 Peter 3:1, 5, 6)

Genesis does not say that Sarah audibly addressed Abraham as "lord" but that she did so "inside herself" (Ge 18:9-12)

Christian wife should be supportive of her husband and cultivate heartfelt respect for him (*w03* 11/1 14-15; *fy* 34-5)

Unselfishness is vital, for it helps to make up for human imperfections (*w93* 9/1 20; *w85* 11/1 17-18)

Closeness of mates allows fine opportunities to experience truth of Acts 20:35 (Read)

Unselfishness involves balancing one's desire to please with concern as to the outcome

For example, if husband is overweight, the wife's preparing rich foods may be mistaken kindness

Marriage mates need regular personal communication (*w99* 7/15 21-3; *g01* 1/8 11-13)

Such communication requires the exercise of love, which does not look for its own interests (1Co 13:5)

Wife is often more likely to converse than husband is but needs assurance that husband is lovingly interested in her view

The husband, in turn, needs to note his wife's reactions; he can often increase overall family happiness just by a few words that show he is aware and cares

Where communication exists, there is pleasant companionship, for the mates are drawn together in a warm relationship without major tensions that might otherwise exist

A FAMILY BLESSING—CHILDREN WHO ARE CLOSE TO PARENTS (9 min.)

Children are a reward (Read Psalm 127:3-5)

Blessing of having children is increased when parents and children communicate well (*fy* 65-6)

It is an incomparable pleasure to have the love and trust of a child, to see your training help a child grow in wisdom and faith

Truly get to know your child (*w03* 2/15 23-7)

This requires time, effort, and genuine interest (De 6:6, 7; *w88* 5/1 5; *g85* 1/8 8)

Allow child time to express himself, and be interested in his views

Having child's confidence involves more than his talking with you on general things

Confidence implies speaking even on personal matters, things the child would not discuss with others

Such trust is built by listening even when a matter seems trivial to you (*g93* 7/22 4)

Do not break confidence by later making a public joke of child's view or comments

Child's confidence in you will grow when he hears you pray (*fy* 70)

Aids in retaining confidence: Do not discipline in anger; reason with your child; do not treat teenager like a baby

Warm richness can be added to homelife by parents' arranging for and sharing in worthwhile activity with their children (*w89* 10/1 29; *w86* 8/1 28-9)

Christians realize that they cannot expose their children to much of the world's entertainment and activities

A full schedule of congregation activity along with family-oriented recreation and upbuilding Christian association will help children resist pressure to get involved in gatherings, celebrations, and entertainment that reflect "the spirit of the world" (1Co 2:12)

Let children know that they really are a part of the family; consider their ideas and preferences

Though parents must make final decision, it is often good to ask children what they would like to do for vacation, family outings

MEET THE CHALLENGES YOUR FAMILY PRESENTS, AND SUCCEED (18 min.)

No family today is perfect, but with effort can improve in building warm, happy family

Let us consider some common problems and possible steps that can be taken to resolve them

1. Raising a problem child
2. Teaching children who are already in their teens when parents learn the truth
3. Training children when parents are not united in worship

If you face a different obstacle, comments and principles may still help you

Challenge of raising a difficult child can best be met if parents are consistent, firm, and loving (*fy* 76-89)

Giving in to a difficult child is not the way to improve the family situation (*g03* 4/22 10)

Applying this advice is not easy—takes great patience, self-control—but can in time produce a welcome transformation

Do not let your child determine whether the entire family will be happy

Help your child to see how he or she can share in a warm family life

Sometimes parents become Christians after their children are in their teens

Do not expect immediate changes

Principle of Galatians 6:7 applies; maybe family and associates sowed "weeds" for years

Now you must start to sow good seed and allow this slowly to replace former ways (*w75* 319-20; *fy* 67-75)

Patiently encourage respect for God and his Word (Read Colossians 3:21)

Would be exasperating if you harped on his old habits, expecting complete change overnight

Help such a teenager to realize that you have interest in him *in all respects*, not just in preaching to him

Will make your greater interest in his spiritual well-being more natural and reasonable

This course is a reason for family happiness, for it may unite all (Ga 6:9)

Where mates are not yet united in true worship, Christian mate can still succeed in adding to family happiness (*fy* 129-32)

When husband has become a Christian, his improved ways can add to the stability of the family and to his wife's contentment

He becomes better worker and wage earner, more interested in children, not given to drunkenness, more considerate of his wife

Believing wife can influence children for good so that the life of the whole family improves

Christians should take care not to become overbearing, unbalanced in applying Bible principles

Husbands must use tact in starting to assert headship

Wife should avoid harping on what husband is failing to do; be helpful

Gradually adjusting to Bible principles will make them more easily accepted

Possibility exists for eventually helping mate to take up Christianity and join you in working for a warm family life

Whatever challenge your family presents, realize that with God's help you can meet it and succeed, as others have

GOD WANTS YOUR FAMILY TO BE HAPPY—LISTEN TO HIM (2 min.)

Your family can fulfill God's purpose for warm, happy family life

We are all hindered by imperfection and pressures from Satan's system, yet when we study the Bible and sincerely try to apply what it says, families are strengthened, personalities are improved, and many mistakes are avoided

Bible's counsel is truly up-to-date; Bible principles work for everyone (*fy* 12)

Not only can we attain happiness now but we can look forward to everlasting life in happiness in the new world to come

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on)