

Lesson
9

How to Have a Happy Home

The Bible teaches us that God created the family. He planned for men and women to live together as husbands and wives and to bring children into the world. Because He did, we can depend on Him to help us and our families.

God helps us by being present in our homes. He does this through His Son, Jesus Christ. In a Christian home, Christ is the Head. His presence fills it with joy, peace, and love.

God also helps us by giving us guidelines to follow for family living. These guidelines help people know how to act as husbands and wives and how to behave as parents and children. In this lesson you will study these guidelines.

There is no greater blessing in this world than having a home that is truly Christian. It is a shelter from the storms of sin and trouble all around it. It is a place where children feel secure and loved.

You can make your home a “little bit of heaven” if you do as God tells you!



In this lesson you will study . . .

Pray and Work for the Salvation of Your Family
Be a Good Christian at Home
Keep Marriage Sacred
Follow God’s Pattern for Family Living

This lesson will help you to . . .

- Know how to pray for your family.
- Live for Christ at home.
- Improve your marriage.
- Build a strong, happy family life.

PRAY AND WORK FOR THE SALVATION OF YOUR FAMILY

Objective 1. *Choose to pray for your family members.*

You can pray in faith knowing that this is the will of God. Don't be discouraged if your family doesn't get saved immediately. Keep on praying, knowing that God will answer prayer.

Acts 16:31. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your family."



For You To Do

- 1 Your home can be a "little bit of heaven on earth" if you
 - a) have enough money to furnish it well.
 - b) invite a lot of people in to visit.
 - c) move to a better house or neighborhood.
 - d) follow God's rules for family living.

- 2 If the other members of your family don't become Christians immediately, you should
 - a) keep on praying for them.
 - b) stop praying for them.
 - c) think that God won't save them.

- 3 Pray now for every member of your immediate family. Make a habit of praying for them every day.

BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN AT HOME

Objective 2. *Identify practical ways of living for Christ at home.*

It is easy to act like a good Christian in church, but what kind of a Christian are you at home?

Read the following instructions from the Bible. Think of how you measure up to these teachings at home.

Colossians 3:8-9, 12-14. You must get rid of all these things: anger, passion, and hateful feelings. No insults or obscene talk must ever come from your lips. Do not lie to one another, for you have put off the old self with its habits. Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Be tolerant with one another. . . . You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you. And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity.

Do you show appreciation for the work of your wife or husband? for the help of your children or brothers and sisters? for the sacrifices that your parents have made for you?

Are you loving or selfish? Are you cross and irritable or patient and forgiving? Are you dictatorial, or do you listen to the opinions of others? Are you respectful and obedient to your parents or willful and disobedient?

Are you helpful and obliging? or lazy? Do you gladly cooperate with others without criticizing and complaining? Do you become discouraged easily, or are you cheerful when things go wrong? Do others find it easy to live with you?



For You To Do

4 If you want to have a happy home, humbly admit your failings. Then ask the Lord to help you overcome them. If you are willing to do your part, He will help you.

Ask Forgiveness for Your Wrongs

Jesus taught us to ask forgiveness of those whom we have wronged. If you aren't willing to do this, it will stand in the way of your fellowship with God.

Matthew 5:23-24. So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God.

It isn't easy to say, "I'm sorry that I spoke sharply to you. Please forgive me," but it's a good way to get rid of hard feelings and keep your home happy. Do you have a bad disposition? Acknowledging your fault and asking your loved ones to pray for you is a long step toward victory over it.

James 5:16. Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you will be healed.



For You To Do

5 Your home will be happier if you

- a) make everyone who has been unkind to you ask your forgiveness.
- b) ask forgiveness when you have acted unkindly toward someone in your family.
- c) show everyone that you are the boss and make them afraid of you.

6 Read James 5:16 several times.

Be Cheerful

Have faith in God and praise Him for the answers to your prayers even when everything looks dark.

Nehemiah 8:10. "The joy that the Lord gives you will make you strong."

Do not be discouraged if you have a hard time controlling your temper or some other disagreeable trait in your character. The very effort you are making to overcome it is a testimony of your love for the Lord. He is helping you grow spiritually. Does your growth seem too slow? Look more to the Lord and less to yourself, and you will be surprised how He will solve the problems in your home. God is your loving Father who cares for you.



For You To Do

7 Think over the way you treat the people in your family. What change do you most need to make?

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Ask God to help you make this change, and keep asking.

KEEP MARRIAGE SACRED

Objective 3. *Identify the guidelines God gives for marriage.*

In some communities many couples live together without getting married. When a person becomes a Christian, he or she will want to have a legal marriage. In this way the couple has a better testimony in the community, gives protection of the laws of the land to their family, and honors Christ. If you should need advice about the necessary legal documents, talk with your pastor about it. He will be happy to help you in any way he can.

God's Word takes a strong stand against any kind of sexual relations outside of marriage. It strictly prohibits any flirtation or illicit love affair by either partner with another person.

Couples who keep their marriage vows enjoy great blessings. They can trust each other because they know that each is faithful to the other in thought, word, and deed. As they serve the Lord together, their marriage reflects the life of heaven. It is free from the deception, suspicion, jealousy, and unfaithfulness that wreck so many homes.

Hebrews 13:4. Marriage is to be honored by all.

Romans 12:17. Try to do what everyone considers to be good.

1 Peter 2:12. Your conduct among the heathen should be so good that when they accuse you of being evildoers, they will have to recognize your good deeds.



For You To Do

8 Following are some ideas about marriage. Circle the letter before each one that agrees with Christian teachings.

- a** A couple should live together before marriage to see if they are suited for one another.
- b** The legal ceremony of marriage is unnecessary for people who really love each other.
- c** A couple who wishes to show honor for each other and for God will be legally married.
- d** Love affairs outside of marriage are acceptable as long as they are kept secret.

9 You can depend on God to help you in your marriage. Pray that His love will strengthen your love for each other. Thank Him for your partner. Pray that He will help you keep your marriage vows in thought, word, and deed. Ask God to help you trust each other.

Marry a Christian

Of course, if you are already married to someone who is not a true Christian, your duty is to pray and try to win him or her to Christ. You are to be a faithful wife or husband and let your light shine for God in your home. But if you are still single and are going to get married, be sure to marry a Christian. This is the only way you can have real unity and peace in your family life.

If you marry someone of a different religion, there will always be problems. How can you agree on religious training for the children? How can you bring them up to serve the Lord?

You have accepted Christ as the Master of your life. If your husband or wife doesn't want to serve Him, you will find yourselves going in opposite directions. You will always be torn between two things: the desire to please Christ in everything and the desire to please your companion.

As a Christian you want to please God. You want to be useful to Him, attend church services, enjoy fellowship with other Christians, and take part in the work of the church. You would like to have family prayer at home, praising and serving God together as a family.

The unsaved husband or wife isn't interested in any of these things. Church services probably bore him or her. If your spouse goes with you to church, he or she feels that you should go with him or her to places of amusement that are not good for a Christian. Or else your spouse goes one way, and you go another, making your home unhappy. Worse still, many Christians have let an unsaved companion turn them away from the Lord.

God wants you to have a happy home. He doesn't want you to fall into a trap that Satan uses on so many Christians. God definitely warns you not to marry an unbeliever. The following verse applies to your choice of a husband or wife:

2 Corinthians 6:14. Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done. How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together?



For You To Do

10 Suppose you have a Christian friend who has a non-Christian sweetheart. Your friend asks you what the Bible says about marrying non-Christians. What should you answer?

FOLLOW GOD'S PATTERN FOR FAMILY LIVING

Objective 4. *Choose to follow biblical patterns in your home.*

Be a Good Parent

Parents are responsible to God for taking good care of their children. The father, as head of the house, should provide for the material and spiritual needs of his family. The mother, too, should give the children the loving care that they need. Church activities don't free parents from their responsibilities to their family.



1 Timothy 5:8. But if anyone does not take care of his relatives, especially the members of his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Teach Your Children to Love God

If you teach your children to love God and obey His Word when they are small, you will save them and yourself many heartaches when they are older. Gather the family for a time with God in Bible reading and prayer each day. Let each one take part. Pray together over the problems of each member of the family. Thank God together for His blessings.

Go to Sunday school and church together. Encourage your children to give their lives to God at an early age.

As you worship and serve God together, His love strengthens family ties. As the saying goes, “The family that prays together stays together.”

Ephesians 6:4. Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, raise them with Christian discipline and instruction.

Love Your Family

“God is love.” The more of God you have in your life, the more love you will have for your family. And the more love you have in your home, the happier it will be.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.



For You To Do

- 11** Circle the letter in front of each example of God’s pattern for family living.
- a** John feels called to preach. He abandons his wife and children and begins to travel as an evangelist.
 - b** Martha expects the church leaders to do all the work of teaching her children about God.
 - c** Tom and Susan read the Bible to their children and pray with them each day.
 - d** William disciplines his children fairly. He makes sure they understand what he expects of them.
- 12** If you are a parent, pray for each of your children now. Ask the Lord to help you be patient and understanding. Pray that all family members will love each other more.



Check Your Answers

- 8** Only statement **c** agrees with Christian teachings.
- 1** d) follow God’s rules for family living.
- 10** You should answer that 2 Corinthians 6:14 tells believers not to try to work together with unbelievers. A Christian who marries a non-Christian is disobeying this command. You should also encourage your friend to pray about this problem, asking God to bring him or her a Christian marriage partner.
- 2** a) keep on praying for them.
- 11** Descriptions **c** and **d** are examples of God’s pattern for family living.
- 5** b) ask forgiveness when you have acted unkindly toward someone in your family.