

FAMILY LIFE THAT WARMS THE HEART

Note to the speaker:

Show that close family relationships do not come 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 worldly family (*w78 2/1 7; g64 3/22 9-10*)

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

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

He is the Originator of marriage and has observed over thousands of years what brings success and what leads to failure and unhappiness (*Ge 1:28; 2:18*)

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

Will also consider some problems that may come up and how these can be dealt with

First, we ought to give attention to husband and wife, as they are keys to wholesome home

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

Husband is assigned headship but should deal lovingly and unselfishly with his wife (*hp 81-2*)

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

He is to recognize wife as “weaker vessel” (*Read 1 Peter 3:7*)

Not a wife who is kept low, degraded, but one with a dignified standing (known for fine conduct and admirable qualities) 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*)

The Genesis account about Sarah does not say she audibly addressed Abraham as “lord”; Genesis 18:9-12 shows that she did so inside, felt it in heart

Christian wife might not actually call husband “lord,” yet should cultivate respect and give support (*hp 82-4; w79 2/15 3-4*)

Some might feel: ‘I know that many couples have achieved much family success and happiness by applying those principles. But somehow we seem to be falling short.’ Why?

Unselfishness is vital, for it helps to make up for human imperfections (*w85 11/1 17; g69 8/8 3-8*)

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

If husband is overweight, cooking rich desserts may be mistaken kindness

Mutual unselfish concern by both mates helps to develop warm, happy family

Marriage mates need regular communication with each other on personal level. How is the communication between you and your mate? (*w83 6/1 12-17; hp 84-5*)

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

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

The husband, in turn, needs to note his wife’s reactions; can often increase overall family happiness by just 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

Perhaps you have children; how can you help them?

A FAMILY BLESSING—CHILDREN WHO ARE CLOSE TO PARENTS (8 min.)

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

Blessing of having children is increased when parents and children communicate well (*w89 10/1 27-9*)

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 (*w88 5/1 6, chart*)

Truly getting to know your child requires time and effort (*w85 8/15 22-3; w71 588-92*)

How can you really get to know child? By showing genuine interest and frequently being together and talking. Do you do that? (*De 6:6, 7; g85 1/8 8; w88 5/1 5*)

Allow child time to make expressions, 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 secret matters, things the child would not discuss with others

Such trust is built by listening even when a matter seems trivial to you

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

Child’s confidence will grow when he hears you pray (*fl 149-50*)

Aids in retaining confidence: Do not punish in fit of anger; reason with your child; do not treat teenager like a baby (*w87 10/1 16-17; tp 172-3*)

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 they cannot let their children share in many activities of worldly children, so they *ought to plan substitutes*

If child cannot go to worldly gathering, can you plan association with Christians?

Let children know they are real part of family; consider their ideas and preferences

Though parents must make final decision, it is often good to ask children what they would like for vacation, family outing. Do you?

Some may react: 'That seems excellent, but we have a major problem in our family that makes achieving happiness hard. What can we do?'

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

(1) Having a problem child; (2) children who are already in their teens, so it seems too late; (3) when parents are not united in worship

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

Challenge of a difficult child can best be met if parents are consistent, firm, and loving

What is the Bible's counsel on training such children? (Pr 22:15; 29:15, 17; Eph 6:4)

Bible urges firm, consistent discipline; is expression of love (Pr 13:24; *fl 131-8*)

Giving in to a difficult child is not the way to improve the family situation (*w90 5/15 29 ¶3; w85 3/15 27*)

Applying this advice is not easy—takes infinite patience, self-control—but can in time produce a welcome transformation (*w85 8/15 26-7*)

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

Help your child to see how it can share in a warm family life

Offspring who are teenagers when parents learn truth need not be an insurmountable obstacle (*w75 319-20*)

Do not expect immediate change

Principle of Galatians 6:7 applies; maybe you and his associates for years sowed "weeds" in him

Now you must start to sow good seed and allow this slowly to replace former ways

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

When husband has become 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 (*gm 168-72; w85 3/1 11*)

Believing wife can so influence children for good that the whole family life improves (Illustrate with local experience, or use *it-2 860 ¶3; w77 493-4; w70 551*)

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

Husbands must use tact in starting to assert headship (*w83 6/1 18 ¶6*)

Wife should avoid harping on what husband is failing to do; be helpful (*w85 11/1 25*)

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 warm family life (*w88 11/1 7; w89 4/1 31*)

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—WORK WITH HIM (3 min.)

God's purpose for warm, happy families is a goal your family can reach and/or maintain

All humans are hindered by imperfection and pressures from Satan's system, yet most Witness families are unusually happy (*w89 4/1 31; g73 4/22 23*)

Since it is God's will for families to be happy, should study and apply his counsel

As you constantly do so in cooperation with God's people, you personally will have joy of seeing homelife become warmer and happier; will be joy for others to behold too

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