



# | Welcome

Home & Family Course



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Seventh-day  
Adventist' Church  
Family Ministries

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## Table of Contents

7. A Family with Purposes
11. Healing Wounds
15. Learning to Communicate
19. Resolving Conflicts
23. Keep the Flame of Love Alive!
27. Restoring the Family
31. Emotions Under Control
35. The Power of Discipline
39. Family Time
43. Overcoming Suffering
47. Eight Laws for Families to Live Better
51. The Financial Health of the Home
55. The Serving Family

## Presentation



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And how is your family doing? We almost always ask this question to people we meet along the way. And almost always the answer is automatic: “Very well, thank you.” This response doesn’t always correspond to the reality we observe in our daily lives. What is wrong with many families?

Along our journey and in the rush that modern life imposes on us, we haven’t always established the correct priorities in our lives. Sometimes we forget that we are not alone in this journey; we have people for whom we are responsible and whom we influence in building their present and future. These are: parents, siblings, spouses, children, grandchildren, and others who are part of the most important circle of human life, the family. What we really want is to see the people in this circle enjoying good health, being well-

lished, happy, and secure. But this doesn’t always happen. If we want our loved ones to achieve these ideals, it will require from us: effort, time, dedication, wisdom, and knowledge from the One who is the way, the truth, and the life: Jesus. With the aim of making known the truths about our loving God and His plans for all families, we present the series of themes “Hope for the Family.” We pray that through these lessons, we all have hope for a better life in a coming world. Enjoy!

# Introduction



**Pr. Willian Oliveira** Psychologist  
and professor of Systematic  
Theology

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The world has never been so crowded, and human beings have never been so lonely. In a time of weakened relationships and isolation, it seems that the only concern is individual happiness.

To achieve it, people travel around the world and try everything until they discover that it is very close, in their own backyard, like the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). He believed that things could take the place of people and tasted everything, until he understood that he should turn to his family. There is hope in family, for family, and for the family. This study was designed to be conducted within the family. Its proposal is relational. This means that the exchange of experiences between instructor(s) and student(s) allows both parties to develop, which encompasses three aspects: The first is the role of each member within the family. If in other instances of life, human beings discover that they

are replaceable, it is within the home that they recognize their true importance. Each member can contribute to making their home a better place. Second, it is to understand that God has a plan for the family. Living in a world that seems to have forgotten about the family, it is good to know that the God who created it has not forgotten and has very special good news for every home on Earth. It is only necessary to dedicate time to find these treasures in the Scriptures. Finally, and most importantly, by studying these lessons, the whole family will be led to make vital decisions that will result in changes, after all, improving and growing involves change.

## Lesson 1

# A Family with Purposes

We are living in a moment of general crisis, and it has affected the family. It seems that nowadays, it has become increasingly difficult to keep the family together. What makes the family something special for us? Why is the family important? What can we do to experience happiness in the family?

## You and Your Family

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1

**Who created the family?** (Genesis 1:28)

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Marriage was created by God and blessed by Him. God has a plan for your family just as He had a plan for Adam's family!

2

**What should a man be for a woman, and vice versa?** (Genesis 2:18)

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We are social beings. We need each other to survive. In marriage, husband and wife become one flesh (Genesis 2:8). Man and woman were created differently from each other, but we are not from different planets! They are physical, emotional, and mental differences that, when understood, enrich the relationship.

3

**What is necessary to deal with differences?** (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

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The great news is that love can be developed in each of these qualities. We can grow in love, even when it seems there is no way.

# 4

**What did Adam recognize in Eve?** (Genesis 2:23)

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The expression “bones of my bones” indicates that Adam recognized in Eve someone special with whom he wanted to share his life. (Make a list of three positive things you admire about your spouse and show it to him/her.)

## Your Family and God

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# 1

Who can we **turn to when difficulties arise in our homes?** (Psalm 127:1)

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While the couple is committed to building a loving relationship for themselves, difficulties will arise. But when spouses ask for God’s help, they will certainly find help.

# 2

**What does marriage teach us about God?**

- 1 John 4:8 \_\_\_\_\_
- Deuteronomy 6:4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Corinthians 13:13 \_\_\_\_\_

Just as man and woman become one flesh, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons, but one God.

# 3

**God also has a family. Whom does He invite to participate in it?** (Ephesians 2:19)

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God used to meet with Adam and Eve every day. He wants to live in intimacy with human beings. Like a great family, God wants us to support each other in the face of crises (Galatians 6:2).



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# Family Decision

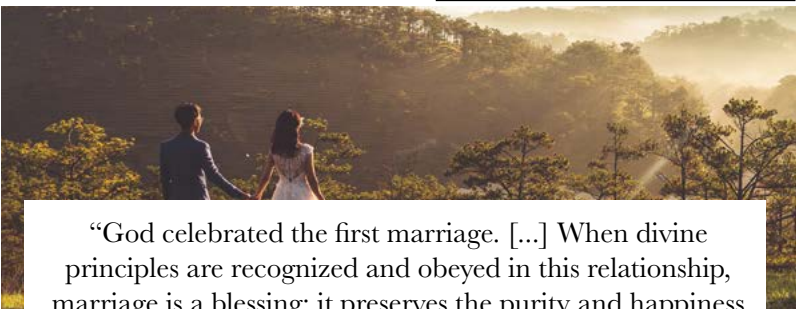
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*I understand that marriage is a blessing from God for me. I will seek to develop my love for my spouse. In the face of any difficulties that may exist in our home, I desire the help of God. I want God to receive me into His family.*



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## Food for thought



“God celebrated the first marriage. [...] When divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relationship, marriage is a blessing; it preserves the purity and happiness of the human race, provides for the social needs of man, and elevates physical, intellectual, and moral nature.”

*Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 46.*

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**F**amily is a topic that both motivates and worries us, especially when we see some statistics about the decline of marriages. Data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows that marriage rates are declining. Gross rates were 7 to 9 marriages for every 100 people in 1970. In 1995, for comparison purposes, this rate was between 5 and 7 marriages for every 100 people.

From a biblical perspective, it is very important to understand that families were established not just for the satisfaction and pleasure of their members.

God had higher purposes in mind when creating the marriage of Adam and Eve and subsequently extending it to their children.

In Genesis 1:28, there is a strong indication of the primary role of the couple in the Garden of Eden. They were not only to populate the planet but to do so with the idea of caring for God’s creation, that is, subduing creation. This means that man and woman would act as “managers” of God in this world, ready to do His will and, of course, show His divine character to other people.



In verse 24 of chapter 2, it becomes clear that the man and the woman form a couple for united action, even with their differences in thinking, but focused on the same goal. Living as one flesh is much more than sexual union, but the union of purpose. And, of course, here God emphasizes that they act as a missionary team, if we want to use that expression. They are, from marriage,

a family separate from their parents to give their own testimony of faith in God.

In fact, a family with missionary purposes is a family that has a defined Christian goal. It doesn't exist just to enrich itself, acquire academic knowledge, live for its own pleasures. It goes way beyond that. It fulfills God's expectation described in the conversation with Abraham about his offspring and the role he would have in "blessing the families of the earth".

This was the ideal for Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, and it is the same for families today. Anyone who considers themselves Christian must be consistent with the faith they profess to have. Couples should come together around a mission much greater than they may imagine, which is to spiritually save people. The life of a family consecrated to God is a strong proof and inspiration for those who are suffering and, perhaps, can only see a deteriorated marriage, unhappy children, and a home without prospects for unity and joy.

### **From conversation to practice**

- Pray as a family (father, mother, and children) to understand which missionary activities they could do as a group. Set a goal and put a deadline to accomplish it (in 3, 6, or 9 months, for example). It can be praying for a neighbor, giving Bible studies, inviting someone to go to church, making lunch for someone who is alone, visiting someone who is sick, etc.
- Read, as a family, in home worship, chapter 21 of the book *Christian Service*. The title is: "The Home as a Center for Missionary Education".

## Lesson 2

# Healing Wounds

It is told that in Madrid a father wanted to reconcile with his son who had left home after an argument, without leaving any news. He decided to place an ad in a newspaper saying: “Paco, if you forgive me, please meet me in the square in front of the station, tomorrow at noon. Your father”. On the established day and time, there were 800 boys named Paco, all of them trying to reconcile broken relationships with their parents!

Many of us live with deep wounds that imprison us and seem to have no solution. We need freedom, but where can we find it?

## You and your family

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1

**How can we face the hurts that cause us pain?** (1 Peter 4:8)

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2

**Jesus told a parable** (Matthew 18:21-34) **that illustrates what forgiveness is. What practical lessons can we draw from the parable?**

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- a. Whoever does not understand the forgiveness that God grants will never learn to forgive.
- b. The key to true forgiveness is to stop focusing on what others have done to us, and then start looking at what God has done and is doing for us.
- c. When we do not forgive, no matter what the damages may be, the biggest damage is living poorly with ourselves and our feelings.

d. Forgiveness comes at a cost. Forgiveness takes time and work. Forgiving involves recognizing and dealing with the way you were hurt, choosing not to retaliate, or make the other person suffer, as well as abandoning your own anger. Abandoning does not mean that you have forgotten, but it frees you to be healed.

*“Forgiveness is a psychological and social resource that regulates human relationships”* (John Bercz). Not forgiving is to maintain the role of the victim, which does not allow for growth. It is to live with anger, hurt, and resentment all the time, as it preserves a situation from the past that influences the present and compromises the future.

## Your family and God

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1

**What was the Earth like when it came out of the hands of the Creator?** (Genesis 1:31)

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2

**How did it become after sin?** (Genesis 3:16-19)

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3

**What other consequences did sin bring?** (Romans 6:23)

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The first sin consisted of disobedience to God, which happened when Adam and Eve were away from each other (Genesis 3:1). The couple's distance also provoked accusations (Genesis 3:12).

The closer they are to each other, the better the couple will know how to deal with difficulties.

4

**What was necessary to restore the imbalance generated by sin?** (Matthew 26:28)

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5

**What can we do for others?** (Luke 6:37)

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By forgiving others, we experience the freedom of divine forgiveness in our lives.

6

**Once forgiven, how should our life be?** (2 Corinthians 5:17)

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Guilt is extremely destructive. We need self-forgiveness in our lives. In Christ, we have the opportunity for a new beginning!

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## Family decision

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*I want to live the freedom of Christ's forgiveness in my life. I want to offer this forgiveness to my family and to someone who hurt me.*

*I want to receive Jesus' forgiveness in my life.*



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## Food for thought

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“We owe everything to God’s free grace. The grace of the covenant prescribed our adoption. The grace of the Savior effects our redemption, regeneration, and exaltation to co-heirs with Christ. May this grace be revealed to others.”

*Parables of Jesus, p. 250.*

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**I**t sounds strange in today's society to talk about the concept of sin. The relativistic discourse of many does not find room to admit that we all have guilt and grievances. These are elements that we have to deal with, consciously or unconsciously. Even though some insist on living as if they did not exist, these two feelings are there and can often become uncontrollable and impossible to live with. In the Bible, sin is presented as a destabilizing element in human interaction with God. In the book of Genesis, the devastating effect of this separation between man and his Creator is explained, but the consequences are still here.

The Psalmist says that human beings are naturally sinners and even asserts in Psalm 51:5 that "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Sin, therefore, is not a kind of behavior to be overcome, but a condition that affects human beings in all their relationships.

The good news is that it is biblically possible to heal the wounds of sin. Hurt and guilt, for example, do not need to make our lives unbearable. In his conversation with the Apostle Peter, Jesus taught him the concept of forgiveness. In Matthew chapter 18, verse 22, Christ, in response to Peter's question about how many times someone should forgive, said, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times" (ESV). Historically, Peter brought an idea that forgiveness could be given to someone up to seven times, but Christ broke this limited way of thinking about the subject.

Forgiveness is unlimited because the number of times it is necessary is unlim-

ited. In the family context, two thoughts can be developed to understand the issue. The first is that forgiveness comes from God, for He is the first to forgive the naturally sinful human being. It is not a human initiative, but a divine one. And all we have to do is accept this forgiveness because it is offered to each of us in remission.

The second point is that the same process must occur within the family. Just as we receive divine forgiveness freely, we must always forgive each other. We must exercise what we have been taught. Without forgiveness in the home, there will be tension, unresolved grievances, and we insist on not dealing with them. The family gradually becomes disorganized and cannot even understand why this is happening.

It is the grievance, the sin not admitted among family members, that will corrode relationships until they no longer exist. This applies to both couples and children. Wisely, the Apostle James suggests in his letter in chapter 5, verse 16: "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

#### **From talk to action:**

- Gather the family once a week for a forgiveness moment, where they will tell each other what hurt or upset them. Then ask each other for forgiveness and end with a prayer.
- Read, as a family, chapter 19 of the book *Parables of Jesus* by Ellen White, titled "How Forgiveness is Attained."

## Lesson 3

# Learning to Communicate

Most marriage counselors agree that the foundation of a good marriage is the ability to communicate effectively. On the other hand, the more difficult communication is, the greater complications can arise in the relationship.

## You and Your Family

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### 1

#### What can we do to improve our communication?

- Ecclesiastes 3:1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Set a time to talk with your spouse daily.
- Proverbs 15:1 \_\_\_\_\_  
When we speak aggressively, the risk is twofold: we end up distancing ourselves from those we love and we may end up influencing our children to act in the same way. If you are upset, calm down before speaking.
- James 1:19 \_\_\_\_\_  
One of the best tactics for achieving infinite communication is to listen more and speak less.
- Proverbs 25:11 \_\_\_\_\_  
The way we speak is as important as what we say.

### 2

#### What other step is important in good communication? (John 2:25)

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It is important to know your spouse. Do you know the three things your spouse likes to do the most and the ones they like the least? Make a list and compare the results.

Remember that communication is not just about what is said. Before getting upset about something that was said, try to understand the real reasons behind it. If your spouse complains that you're not giving attention to the family, note that behind this accusation there is a request for you to spend more time with her.

# 3

**And if one day you lose control, what to do?** (1 John 1:9)

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Recognizing the mistake and forgiving each other can be the beginning of a restorative dialogue.

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## Your family and God

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God also wants to communicate efficiently with us. When we pray, we talk to God, and when we read His word, He speaks to us.

# 1

**What does the Bible teach about prayer?**

- 1 Peter 4:7 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 7:7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Daniel 6:10 \_\_\_\_\_
- James 5:16 \_\_\_\_\_

# 2

**What does God have to say to us through His word?**

- John 17:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 15:4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 10:17 \_\_\_\_\_

We were created with the ability to communicate, and God wants to communicate with us daily.



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## Family decision

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*With God's help, I intend to put good communication into practice in my home.  
I want to communicate with God daily through reading His Word and prayer.*



## Food for Thought



“We should accustom ourselves to speak in a pleasant tone, using pure and correct language, with kind and courteous words. Soft and kind words are to the spirit as dew and gentle rain. Scripture says of Christ that there was a grace on His lips that knew ‘how to speak a good word to him that is weary.’ Isaiah 50:4. And the Lord commands us: ‘Let your speech be always with grace’ (Colossians 4:6), ‘that it may minister grace unto the hearers.’ Ephesians 4:29.

*Parables of Jesus, p. 336.*

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**T**he Bible passage in Ephesians, chapter 4 and verses 26 and 27, presents a very interesting concept related to interpersonal relationships. There, the apostle Paul, recalling the Psalms, states in a list of advice to his readers: “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” Anger, resentment, human feelings that can occur with anyone, cannot destroy relation-

ships between people. Especially when it concerns a couple who, before God, vowed loyalty under divine direction.

Reasons for disappointment, hurt feelings, misunderstandings, etc., are very common in the life of a couple with or without children. And the way this is faced by the man and the woman will determine what kind of communication will exist in the family.



Communication is not limited, and it is important to understand this, to someone sending a message and the other supposedly receiving and decoding that message (that is, assimilating it). In marriage, this maxim becomes even more real. Communication has much more to do with the relationship between the people who express themselves in dialogues and attitudes that allow two people to communicate properly to resolve their dilemmas and challenges.

For this reason, the text in Ephesians makes perfect sense. One cannot speak of efficient communication for a couple while resentment is strong and alive between two people who have decided to form a family. Communication between the couple and, consequently, with the children, needs to start from a home where grievances are not considered normal or commonplace. Anger may arise because there is tension in daily life, but the sun cannot set without it being resolved or even becoming the subject of an honest dialogue among family members.

Quality communication in the home, therefore, means putting grievances aside and overcoming them. But an important step that even comes before this is the need for sincere and real communication with God, the originator of the family. The one who united the couple and allowed them to be one to serve Him and serve people must be sought with all fervor and dedication by each person.

Obviously, communication in the family will involve other aspects that will contribute to people not only talking. But that this dialogue results in a better, more respectful, less selfish relationship, more in line with biblical principles.

It is worth noting the need for men and women to consider each other's feelings and needs. Without one desiring to exercise dominance and hinder communication, in times of crisis or even in pleasant moments. When it comes to difficult issues, the ability to put oneself in the other's place (empathy) is essential, and patience needs to be practically exercised.

And obviously, all of this will only work if time is dedicated to this conversation. Time without interruptions, distractions, or deviations to other commonplace topics. Ideally, there should be no lack of time, no moment for this dialogue, for this effective communication, between husband and wife or between parents and children.

#### **From Conversation to Practice:**

- Create a moment of sincere or open conversation at home and encourage everyone to talk more about the positive and negative points of the day. It can be before lunch, dinner, or breakfast.
- The couple can read chapter 16 titled "Happy Companionship" from the book *Christian Home Principles*.

## Lesson 4

# Resolving Conflicts

An older couple was sharing with another couple the secret of not having arguments. They simply had not spoken to each other in years. A happy and long-lasting marriage does not mean the absence of conflicts. This is a myth and needs to be changed. In fact, what makes a marriage successful is the couple's ability to overcome their conflicts. How can we do that?

## You and Your Family

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Steps to resolve conflicts:

1

**Ephesians 4:26-27**

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Avoid the freezing silence. Do not let small daily grievances turn into long periods of silence.

2

**Matthew 26:38**

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Instead of talking about what the other person did, prefer to talk about what you are feeling. Use "I" instead of "you" to express your feelings. Remember: the hurt is yours, not your spouse's, so avoid attacking them.

3

**James 1:19**

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Be ready to listen. If you are overwhelmed by emotion, you won't be able to hear anything. Relax and then express your thoughts.

4

**James 5:16**

---

In a discussion, we are never entirely right or entirely wrong. Confess your faults to one another.

5

**James 5:8**

---

We should cultivate patience. With each conflict we overcome, our patience is strengthened.

6

**Philippians 2:4**

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Remember that in every argument, there are always two sides. The differences in how things are perceived need to be understood and accepted. This way, dilemmas can be overcome, and what cannot be changed can be accepted.

7

**Ephesians 6:12**

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Remember that your spouse is not your real enemy. Our battle is against the powers of the enemy. He wants to destroy your home, but know that in Christ, we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37).

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## Your Family and God

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The Bible also talks about a great conflict.

1

**Where and between whom was the conflict?** Revelation 12:7-9

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Lucifer, the name of Satan before his fall, waged war against God because he wanted to be like Him (Isaiah 14:12-14).

2

**Will this conflict ever end?** Revelation 14:6-7.

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3

**What are the results of this great battle?**

- In heaven (Revelation 12:4) \_\_\_\_\_
- On earth (Genesis 3:23) \_\_\_\_\_  
Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2).

4

**What will be the basis of our judgment?** Revelation 20:12

\_\_\_\_\_

5

**Who will be our advocate?** 1 John 2:1

\_\_\_\_\_

6

**What can we do to be freed from sin and stand before God again?** 1 John 1:9

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When we confess our sins to God, He offers His forgiveness (Romans 4:7-8).

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## Family decision

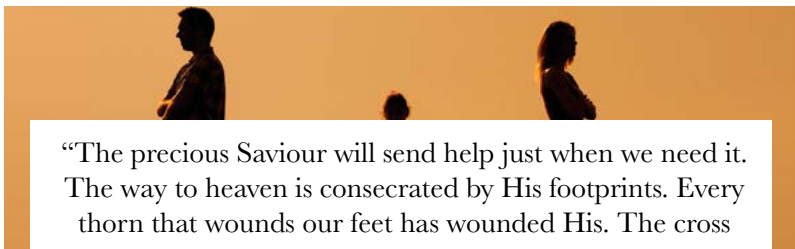
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*With God's help, I intend to put good communication into practice in my home.*

*I desire to communicate with God daily through reading the Word and prayer.*



Food for thought



“The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds our feet has wounded His. The cross

that we are called to bear, He has borne before us. The Lord permits conflicts to prepare the soul for peace.”

*The Great Controversy*, p. 633.

**C**onflicts were never on God's agenda in Heaven as something enjoyable or ideal for His creatures. On the contrary, biblically, conflicts became a reality when Lucifer, one of God's angels, decided to confront the Creator and, in his pride, criticized God, His character, and positioned himself against what had been established. Sin was born, and consequently, conflict.

In the human sphere, conflict constantly arises between people who disagree, diverge, and, in some extreme cases, even become aggressive and offensive towards each other. In the family, whether between husband and wife or between parents and children, conflicts are part of reality. And in many cases, they become opportunities for a change in attitudes and behaviors.

Some characteristics mark family conflicts, and for them to be resolved, these traits need to be observed and worked on.

### **Silence and hurt**

Hurt feelings nurtured by mother, father, or child, unresolved, undiscussed, and not faced with frankness, become hidden tumors that slowly destroy people over time. And in this context, silence is highly detrimental because it hinders the process of dialogue and seeking a solution.



### **Lack of empathy**

The inability of one person to put themselves in another's place, that is, to exercise empathy, is fatal in a family. Conflicts are daily occurrences and often caused by small details and situations. Trying to understand why the other acted in a certain way or at least imagining what is going on in the other's mind is an essential step in conflict resolution.

### **Listening skills**

Listening is a much more important exercise than one imagines. It is not just about listening to the other disinterestedly, but really valuing what is being said. In the family, this acquires an even more valuable character because, often, emotional turmoil leads the father, mother, or children to thoughtless acts, and therefore, one side needs to maintain balance by listening more than speaking. Discussing aggressively never leads to a peaceful solution. On the contrary, it usually aggravates the already complex scenario.

### **From theory to practice**

Take a test. Try taking the first step to resolve a family conflict. Be the first to listen, try to think about how the other feels about a certain situation, and do something practical.

In the family, read chapter 30 titled “The Companionship of the Family” from the book “*The Adventist Home*.”

## Lesson 5

# Keep the Flame of Love Alive!

Once a couple was enjoying a beautiful moonlit night. Suddenly a cloud passed in front of the Moon, covering it. Remembering how romantic her husband used to be during their courtship, in a situation like this he would say that the Moon had hidden because of the beauty of his beloved. She asked where the Moon was, and the husband replied, “Can’t you see it’s behind the cloud? Let’s go home, it’s going to rain.” What can we do to keep the flame of love alive in our relationships?

## You and your family

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One of the biggest difficulties in relationships is the wear and tear produced by routine, monotony, lack of dialogue, and attention. The wise King Solomon wrote precious information in the book of Song of Solomon that can help:

1

### **Song of Solomon 2:4**

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Have a special moment alone together. Make room for romance in your schedule.

2

### **Song of Solomon 2:15**

---

Be aware of the “little foxes” that destroy relationships. Children, work, relatives, and lack of creativity can be elements that cause great strain on the couple.

# 3

## Song of Songs 7:10

Show affection for your spouse. Be attentive to their emotional needs. You need to know what pleases your spouse:

- Compliments (Song of Songs 4:7) \_\_\_\_\_
- Touch (Song of Songs 2:6) \_\_\_\_\_
- Service (Song of Songs 8:2) \_\_\_\_\_
- Attention (Song of Songs 7:11) \_\_\_\_\_
- Gifts (Song of Songs 8:12) \_\_\_\_\_

To know what pleases your spouse, start by asking what they miss the most or what they would like you to do for them the most.

In 1 John 3:18, John says that we should demonstrate love through actions. Acts of love will produce love.

## Your family and God

Jesus knew that love needs to be cultivated. He used marriage to illustrate His love for us (Revelation 19:7). In His love, Jesus, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), also desires that we keep the flame of our love alive. He himself promised to come back (John 14:3) because He wants us to be with Him for all eternity.

# 1

## What would happen in the days leading up to the return of Christ?

- Matthew 24:12 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 24:3-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 21:25 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 24:6-7 \_\_\_\_\_



2

**How will the coming of Christ be?** Revelation 1:7

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3

**What should we do while waiting for the return of Christ?**

• Matthew 25:13 \_\_\_\_\_

• James 5:8 \_\_\_\_\_

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## Family decision

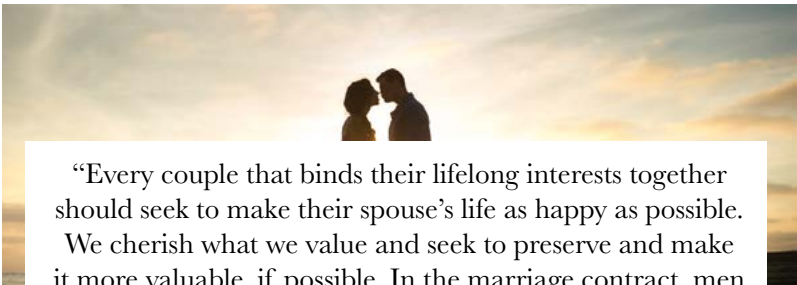
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*I desire to express my love for my family daily.*

*I desire to prepare myself for the meeting with Christ when He returns.*



## Food for thought



“Every couple that binds their lifelong interests together should seek to make their spouse’s life as happy as possible. We cherish what we value and seek to preserve and make it more valuable, if possible. In the marriage contract, men and women made an agreement, an investment for life, and they should do everything possible to control their words of impatience and bad mood, even with greater care than before the wedding, because now their destinies are united for life, as husband and wife, and each one is evaluated in exact proportion to the amount of painful effort to retain and maintain always new love, so anxiously sought and appreciated before marriage.”

*The Care of God, p. 183.*

**R**omance in marriage can be seen in two distinct ways: Like a movie production in which the man courts the woman all the time and surprises her daily with incredible acts of affection. He runs out to buy a flower before she arrives home, makes a memorable special dinner, and so on. Or, going into reality, it is the type of constant action taken to keep affectionate bonds strong and consistent. The threat of monotony in marriage and the tedious routine that wears on the relationship is real for all people who live together for a certain period of time. And in some cases, this can be a reason for separation or divorce. In fact, statistical data is not encouraging.

The website Hopes and Fears conducted a survey and found the average length of marriages in some cities around the world. In Rome, for example, the average time was 18 years, with an average divorce rate of 30.7%. In Ottawa, the capital of Canada, the average time was 13.8 years and the average divorce rate was 48%. Then there are cities like Paris, New York, Sydney, Mexico City, Tokyo, London, and others. Regardless of the causes that may be related to this phenomenon, ranging from the ease in various cities to achieve divorce to economic causes in the couple's life, the fact is that there is always an ingredient of wear and tear there, most of the time (speaking empirically, of course).

Cultivating values and practices within marriage can be an important antidote against the evil of wear and tear. Routine is the environment in which all marriages enter, so it may not be necessarily bad in itself. What is done from this observation is what will probably make the difference for husband and wife.

Important issues need to be taken into account and we could summarize them in three (there are others). But these three synthesize, in a way, where the root of the wear and tear problem in routine may be.

### **Lack of dialogue**

Poor or nonexistent communication in marriage for a prolonged period of time is usually the triggering factor for the start of wear and tear. The couple who stops talking to each other out of pride, vanity, selfishness, or any other reason may be taking the first step for the routine to become highly detrimental to the survival of the relationship.

### **Lack of attention**

Disregard for the other's opinion, reality, inability to be interested in what the other does, says, or demonstrates is also a certain threat. It's not just about creating incredible moments for a candlelit dinner. It's about a conversation, perhaps over a dinner out, in which, more than expensive food or a different program, the couple learns to listen to and be more interested in each other's things.

### **Lack of gestures of affection**

Mechanical, cold, and even formal daily coexistence eliminates the desire to surprise, not necessarily with expensively purchased gifts, but with gestures of affection. It is the touch with sensitivity in times of joy and pain, but it is also the right, gentle word in times of anguish and agony. It's the timely silence when you need to reflect more internally. This can also sound like affection. There is no problem with having flowers, a creative little gift, but also, affection can come in the form of help with children, support in a household activity, etc.

### **From theory to practice:**

- The couple can establish a regular schedule (weekly, biweekly, or monthly) for outings and programs with just the two of them.
- The couple can read chapter 31 entitled "Security through love" from the book *Fundamentals of Christian Home*.

## Lesson 6

# Restoring the Family

A preacher asked a child where heaven was. Pointing forward, the child said, “It’s in apartment 902 in that building.” That boy witnessed his father’s drunkenness and fights, and his mother called their home a hell. But the man learned about the gospel and changed completely. Now his mother said their home was a heaven. Is it possible to make your home a little heaven? What can the Bible teach to facilitate relationships within the family?

## You and your family

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The family is composed of social roles. Thus, the man is a husband and father, the woman, mother and wife, the children, sons and siblings. When each member of the family knows what to do to make their home better, things become easier. The Bible offers some useful advice for the whole family.

### 1

#### **What are the duties between husband and wife?**

- Ephesians 5:22 \_\_\_\_\_
- Ephesians 5:25 \_\_\_\_\_

If submission is the wife’s part, sacrifice is the husband’s. Both need to understand that in marriage, we deny ourselves for the sake of “us.”

2

**And what about parents and children?**

- Ephesians 6:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_
  - Ephesians 6:4 \_\_\_\_\_
- Children need to learn discipline, authority, respect, and obedience from an early age. On the other hand, parents should avoid contradictory behavior (“do as I say, not as I do”) or belittling their children (“you’re worth nothing!”). Children need to understand that they are important and that their lives have a special purpose.

3

**And what about siblings?** Psalm 133:1

Children often compete with each other for their parents’ attention. They need to feel equally loved and protected so that they are united. In short, a happy family is one in which each member strives to please and serve the other.

## Your family and God

Jesus also prepared a beautiful home for us to live with Him.

1

**What was Jesus’ promise to His disciples?** (John 14:2-3)

2

**What is the home that He has prepared for us like?**

- 1 Corinthians 2:9 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 32:18 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 60:18 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 33:24 \_\_\_\_\_
- Revelation 21:3 \_\_\_\_\_

3

**When will we be able to enter there?** 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

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4

**What will happen then?** Revelation 20:6

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5

**And what about those who did not accept Christ? What will happen to them?** Revelation 20:5,12-14

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6

**After the final defeat of evil, where will our eternal home be?** Revelation 21:1-2

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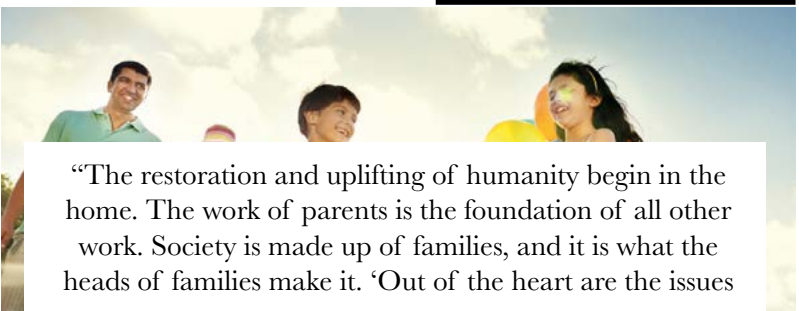
## Family decision

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*I will strive to make my home a better place every day. I want to prepare myself, along with my family, to live in the home that God has prepared for us.*



## Food for thought



“The restoration and uplifting of humanity begin in the home. The work of parents is the foundation of all other work. Society is made up of families, and it is what the heads of families make it. ‘Out of the heart are the issues

of life' (Proverbs 4:23); and the heart of the community, the church, and the nation is the home. The happiness of society, the success of the church, and the prosperity of the nation depend upon home influences.”

*The Ministry of Healing, p. 349.*

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**I**n the book of Ephesians, especially in chapters 5 and 6, God, through the apostle Paul, outlines a desired profile for parents and children in their relationships. Wisely, the first advice is for the man and woman to love each other to the same extent that Christ loves

His church, that is, in the same way that Christ loves the people for whom He died to offer salvation and grace.

It is interesting because, between verses 23 and 33, it becomes clear that this relationship between man and woman must be one of mutual respect and deep care and concern. The family needs to be preserved, and this preservation is based on the spiritual dimension. It is not enough for the man and woman to be

concerned only with financial stability, comfort, academic formation, or other aspects that, although important, are not essential to maintaining a well-adjusted and balanced family. Spiritual concern needs to be the first and foremost concern, not just occasional.

In dealing with children, chapter 6 also provides important guidance. There are elements there that are somewhat unpopular today, but that have always played an important role in education, such as discipline and admonition or guidance to keep things simple. Children, teenagers, and young people need to be educated, helped, supported, guided, and directed. The extremes that are presented today are harmful. The care-free attitude of some parents, who are absolutely irresponsible and do not care about the type of life and values their children have or do not have, is a threat. On the other hand, authoritarian, merciless, hard, and violent parents do not represent the biblical ideal described by Paul either. They distort the image of God before their children in a way that compromises their ability to see, in the future, who the loving Father really is.

The restoration of the family is not an act that depends on the leadership of a church, a school, or even a government. None of that. It depends primarily on each parent and child. It is in the family environment, dependent on God and His principles, that the restoration that God expects takes place. The Lord wants to restore families back to what was once the original plan He outlined for human happiness. Make no mistake! The family is a means created by God for people to be happy. Following biblical principles is the means by which this can happen.



## Lesson 7

# Emotions Under Control

We were created with a heart that has desires (Psalm 37:5). We have feelings that are expressed through emotions. They add color to life, and are a way of responding to the environment, preparing us for action. The basic emotions (which give rise to others) are: anger, joy, sadness, fear, and affection. In themselves, they are neutral, but in many cases, they have been the source of suffering for many who simply cannot control themselves, and in other cases, for those who have to live with someone who has difficulty dealing with their own emotions or those of others. What can be done to keep emotions under control?

## You and your family

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1

**What does the Bible say about emotional instability?**

- Job 5:2 \_\_\_\_\_
- Job 18:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Losing emotional balance is not healthy.

2

**What can we learn from Jesus about dealing with our emotions?**

- Luke 19:45-46 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 26:38 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 15:10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Matthew 27:43 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 20:34 \_\_\_\_\_

In each of these situations, Jesus expressed his emotions: anger, sadness, joy, fear, and affection, in a balanced way. The big question is not that we cannot express emotions, but how to do so in a healthy way.

3

**What can you do when you are overwhelmed by emotion, or someone in your family loses control?** (Matthew 26:41)

Emotion is not dealt with by emotion or reason, but by the spirit. The best way to balance emotions is through a life of prayer and communion with God. We should allow Him to be the Lord of our emotions.

4

**What can God do if we ever lose emotional control?** Psalm 145:14

## Your family and God

1

**What is the foundation for building our character?** Matthew 7:24-27

If we want to have self-control in all situations, we need to build our life on Christ.

2

**Who can help us recognize and choose between right and wrong?** John 16:8

The Holy Spirit convicts us of what we need to change in our lives. He helps us understand what is sin and what is righteousness in our life.

3

**Who should be our example?** 1 Peter 2:21



4

**What does God want us to develop in our lives?** Galatians 5:22-23

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The expression “fruit of the Holy Spirit” indicates that if we allow it, He will help us grow in each of these important areas of our lives.

5

**How can we overcome our bad habits?** Galatians 2:20

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## Family decision

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*I want to overcome my resentments. I want the power of God in my life so that I can deal with my emotions. I decide to walk as Christ walked, making Him my guide. By the power of the Holy Spirit, I want to allow the Holy Spirit to help me develop the fruit of the Spirit in my life.*



## Food for thought



“If we look at the bright side of things, we will find enough to make us cheerful and happy. If we give smiles, they will be returned to us; if we speak encouraging, pleasant words, they will again be directed toward us.”

*Mind, Character, and Personality, vol. 2, p. 758.*



**T**he Bible speaks a lot about self-control, including it as a virtue that is part of the fruit of the spirit referred to in chapter 6 of the book of Galatians. When it comes to family, this virtue becomes essential for acceptable living between parents and children. Emotions exist and are part of being human, but it is necessary to understand that they cannot predominate in a way that creates ruptures in the family environment.

There is no specific or single rule for speaking about self-control or controlling emotions, as it is something quite individual, but some suggestions from the Bible itself can help strengthen this important characteristic. Some aspects can help:

Allow yourself to be constantly guided by the Holy Spirit and seek Him daily through prayer and Bible study. Without God's supernatural and external interference, it is impossible to talk about self-control.

Understand and continue to understand that it is not always wise to give free rein to every type of emotion, such as anger and wrath. The consequences for relationships can be destructive in this case. Ill-placed, imprudent, or un-

timely words, in the heat of discussion, can hurt and deepen the abysses that often already exist.

Learn to breathe before speaking or acting in any way. In the case of negative emotions, this can reduce the negative impact of a harsh, thoughtless response.

In the case of positive emotions, it is very good to share them, but always in the right measure. It is important to continually try to put oneself in the other person's place (empathy). Sometimes, the euphoria of an extremely happy parent or child contrasts with another family member who is very sad and cannot, at that exact moment, be infected with the other's joy. It is necessary to respect the feelings of others.

Holding negative emotions related to a family member can, in the short term, be detrimental to the resolution of simple problems. And in the long run, it is a very strong instrument to undermine mutual love.

#### **From conversation to practice**

- The couple can read excerpts from the book *How to Deal with Emotions* by Ellen White. Available at [adv.st/lidaremoceo](http://adv.st/lidaremoceo).

## Lesson 8

# The Power of Discipline

Contrary to what one might imagine, discipline is an act of love. God himself agrees with this opinion. He says: “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline” (Revelation 3:19). Many people think that the absence of discipline is the same as love, letting children do whatever they please. As a result, we find desperate parents with aggressive children who will not know how to handle life situations in the future.

## You and Your Family

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### 1

#### **What is needed to bring discipline to the home?**

- Ephesians 6:4  
Be a friend to your child. Remember that discipline should be an act of love and not anger against your child. If you are upset with something your child did, you need to have self-control. Remember that you are teaching your child to behave correctly, and if the child sees the parents' lack of control, they will imitate it.
- Matthew 5:37  
Adults should keep their promises. If you promised to punish your child, do it. When you don't, you teach impunity. If you promised to reward them, keep your promise as well, so that you don't lose the value of your words in front of your children.
- Proverbs 22:6  
Lessons of discipline, respect, authority, and reverence should be presented to the child at a very young age. Don't put it off.

- Proverbs 29:15-17

The rod in the Bible is a measuring instrument (of judgment). Parents should measure their children's actions and make them see where they went wrong and what they need to do to change. The best discipline is not one that uses force to prevent something from happening. It is not enough to say only what should not be done, one should present what should be done.

- Hebrews 12:11

Remember that discipline is an act of love. Of course, we do not rejoice in disciplining, but if we faithfully proceed, it will produce fruit.

- Deuteronomy 6:7

The Bible instructs each father to teach the Word of God to the child daily. Such lessons will never be forgotten.

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## Your family and God

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God knows what is best for us and so He also left us rules so that we could be happy.

1

**What does one experience by living according to God's law?**

Psalm 19:7-8

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2

**What is sin?** 1 John 3:4

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3

**In the last days, would God's law be observed by His followers?** Revelation 14:12

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Read Exodus 20:1-17 and know God's commandments.

# 4

**Knowing the law, what should we do?** Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

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## Family decision

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I desire to prepare my children for this world and for eternal life. I will seek to teach them the Word of God daily. I desire to obey God's law in my life.



## Food for thought



“The character formed in this life determines the destiny for eternity. [...] Every day there are new battles to fight and new victories to be won. Each day the soul must enlarge, pleading fervently with God for the mighty victories of the cross. Parents should not leave undone any work on their part to benefit their children. They should so educate them that they may become...”

*Counsels on Education, p. 43.*

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**H**ophni and Phinehas, who were raised in the priesthood at the temple, knew well the precepts of conduct and reverence they should follow. However, disregarding this knowledge, they acted irresponsibly and immorally, committing all sorts of atrocities against sacred things. Their father,

Eli, did not remain silent. He frequently rebuked them with words and exhortations, which they also ignored.

Even after being warned by God about the punishment that would fall upon his entire family because of the rebellion of his sons, Eli did not change his attitude. The story, narrated in 1 Samuel 2:12-

4:22, shows dramatic consequences that followed generations. But if Eli's reprimands were not enough to educate his sons, what would be?

Discipline in the education of children goes beyond dialogue. Although essential, it must be accompanied by practical lessons so that children can better assimilate learning. It is necessary to show them that their mistakes have negative effects, and this should be taught through restrictions, confiscations, and even physical punishment. "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them at the right time" (Proverbs 13:24).

It is important to note that physical punishment should be proportionate to the child's ability to overcome and understand it. Abusing force is another extreme that, instead of teaching lessons, incites anger and a sense of injustice. Therefore, physical punishment should be exercised when the parent is in full control of their emotions.

In the same way as reprimand, reward needs to be used as a resource in discipline. If punishment shows the child what should not be done, a "reward" teaches them where they are succeeding and encourages them to continue in the right behavior. Parents must pay attention to these details because it is through discipline that character is formed. It is through it that children assimilate principles and values such as punctuality, cleanliness and organization, honesty, loyalty, empathy, self-control, resilience, willingness to work, respect, dignity, and love for God.

In any case, one thing is certain: parents have the primary and non-transferable responsibility to discipline their children. And if they show rebellion, the parents have certainly failed to position

themselves as such. It is very common to interpret the fifth commandment as a guideline for children. But "honor your father and mother" presupposes that they occupy a position of authority that implies an active, not passive, stance. In other words, the commandment also orders parents to demand proper respect and obedience from their children.

Parents are the representative figure of God during the formation of the child's character. Therefore, by teaching them to give due obedience, they are ensuring that in the future, they will be an honorable and God-fearing person.

### From conversation to practice

- Dedicate a family worship to the theme of discipline. Together, read Hebrews 12:5-11. Based on the example of God's love for human beings, demonstrated through discipline, encourage your children to reflect and express how loved they feel when receiving the proper correction for their actions.
- Develop the habit of, when reprimanding your children, dialoguing with them to explain the reason why they are being disciplined and together, extract practical lessons from the situation. Punishment without dialogue and learning is nothing more than mere tyranny.



## Lesson 9

# Family Time

Some time ago, a famous artist couple separated due to scheduling incompatibilities! They were so busy with their work that their marriage couldn't survive the distance between them! What has really been important in our lives? Have we been using our time well? What to do?

## You and your family

### 1

**What does the Bible say about the use of time?** Ecclesiastes 3:1

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We need to learn to use time in such a way that it is a blessing for us and not that we become slaves to it. How to do it?

- Matthew 22:39  
We need to define priorities. Relationships are the ones that suffer the most from the way we use our time. If we don't put them first, we will have difficulty managing our time with the family.
- Ecclesiastes 3:2-8  
We need to establish a daily routine. It's not just about thinking that we dedicate time to the family, but establishing which moments will be and sharing this with all family members.
- Psalm 127:3  
Remember that time should be divided in such a way that children receive attention, that they know their schedules for recreation, food, study, and communion with God.
- Hebrews 13:4  
To honor marriage, the couple should have time and space for their intimacy.

- Psalm 127:2

Value your moments of rest. It is very precious for you to recover your vigor. Don't fill your schedule with more activities than you can accomplish in a day. Ideally, when selecting activities, choose them by priority and have free space each day to deal with setbacks.

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## Your family and God

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Rest and trust are very connected. How many sleepless nights lost due to daily worries? It is no wonder that Christ says that we should not be anxious about anything (Matthew 6:25). He is the Giver of life and knows what we need for our survival.

1

**After creating the whole Earth and human beings, what else did God create?** Genesis 2:2,3

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God indicated that we needed a period designated for rest. God, the Sovereign of the Universe, dedicated a special day for you. We need to learn to rest in God.

2

**How should we set apart a day for God?** Exodus 20:8-11

3

**What blessings does God offer to those who set apart a special day for Him?** Isaiah 58:13 and 14

4

**What day did Jesus observe when he lived among us?** Luke 4:16

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What is the divine invitation to each one of us? Hebrews 4:4 and 9

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## Family Decision

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*I understand that God wants there to be a special time for my family.*

*I will prioritize my relationships in my life.*

*I decide to experience the blessings of keeping the day of rest that God has chosen for me and my family.*



## Food for thought



“The Sabbath and the family were both instituted in Eden, and in God’s purpose, they are indissolubly linked together. On this day, more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. It was God’s plan for the members of the family to associate together in work and study, in worship and recreation. [...]

On His holy day, He reserves for the family the opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another.”

*Education, p. 250-251.*

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**I**t was six days of hard work. Imagine how much creativity God demonstrated in bringing into existence every species, every sound, every smell, every shade of color, every law to govern life! Since the world was formed by Him, this world needed to be in constant contact with Him to continue to exist. That's why the Sabbath was established as a memorial of life and a time to reconnect with its source.

But what does the Edenic Sabbath have to do with the family? Everything. In Eden, the first family was established, representing the type of relationship that God wanted to maintain with His creatures: a relationship of love, companionship, and unity of purposes. By reminding us of our need to be in the presence of God, the Sabbath also teaches us that the family cannot survive without quality time and personal contact.

With distorted priorities, today's society allows routine to swallow up the time that should be dedicated to fundamental things. The family is sacrificed for work and commitments, for the greed of having and being. Yet, it is the foundation of everything!

As the family falls apart, social ills grow. It's not surprising! How can there be ethics, respect, and empathy if they were not learned at home? How can there be health and dignity if temperance and discipline are ignored from youth? How can we expect sanity from adults if children grow up full of traumas and complexes caused by a dysfunctional family? There can be no balance in a world whose foundation is in ruins. Our highest quality time should be dedicated to the family; the rest can wait.

The couple needs to spend hours in healthy dialogue. They must reserve time for their fun, intimacy, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development. They must always seek to surprise each other and remember why they fell in love.

Parents must see the education of their children as a prioritized and non-transferable mission. They must teach them about morals, citizenship, and fear of God by their own example, and this will only be possible if they dedicate time to family dialogues and activities.

These need to be daily habits. But practicing them on Sabbath hours makes them even more special moments, as it unites the family in a spiritual purpose.

#### **From theory to action:**

- Develop the habit of having fun conversations with your family, without demands or criticism, without cell phones, TVs or computers (forget about them at these times!). Meals at the table are excellent opportunities for this.
- Plan activities to do together frequently and set goals to pursue. It could be practicing a physical activity, reading a book, putting together a puzzle, participating in a social project... But don't make it a strict obligation; the idea is to make it a moment of escape, relaxation, and learning, not a burden.
- Don't give up on family worship. It is a very opportune moment to learn about love, principles, values, and reinforce the hope of living with Christ as a family.

## Lesson 10

# Overcoming Suffering

When we open a newspaper, we are immediately confronted with news of tragedies and scenes of despair. Certainly, your own family may have already gone through difficult situations. In these moments of pain and suffering, we wonder what to do and where to find the strength to overcome our difficulties and place our hopes.

## You and Your Family

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It is said that to face pain, the first requirement is to have a positive attitude towards life. What can we do to build a hopeful attitude and find relief in times of anguish?

1

**What does the Bible teach about suffering?** John 16:33

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Suffering is a reality in this world. However, not everything that hurts in your life is the result of something you did. Sometimes it results from things done against you. At other times, it is because you see other people being hurt. A victorious attitude, confident that we can have victory in Christ, is the first element to overcome any barrier.

2

**What can we do to overcome pain? David was someone who suffered the loss of a child. He can teach us how to overcome suffering within our family:**

- 2 Samuel 12:22-23

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Accept what cannot be changed.

- 2 Samuel 12:20 \_\_\_\_\_

Focus on what remains, not what is gone. You do not have to remain a prisoner of your anguish. It is a choice that you have to make.

3

**Besides divine support, who else can we count on when we go through difficulties?** Philippians 4:14

God expects us to support each other in times of difficulty.

## Your Family and God

1

**What were the results of sin in humanity?**

- Genesis 3:16-19 \_\_\_\_\_

- Romans 6:23 \_\_\_\_\_

Indeed, death is the greatest drama that humanity has faced since sin entered this world.

2

**What does the Bible have to say to comfort those who lose a loved one?** I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Death is not the end. The same Christ who died and rose again will bring to life each of those who accepted Him at His return.

3

**And how will the dead be until Christ's return?**

- Ecclesiastes 9:5,6 \_\_\_\_\_

- Psalm 115:17 \_\_\_\_\_

- Job 14:12 \_\_\_\_\_

- Job 7:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

4

**What did Jesus compare death to?** John 11:11-13

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5

**Is it possible to overcome death?** John 11:25 and 26

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## Family decision

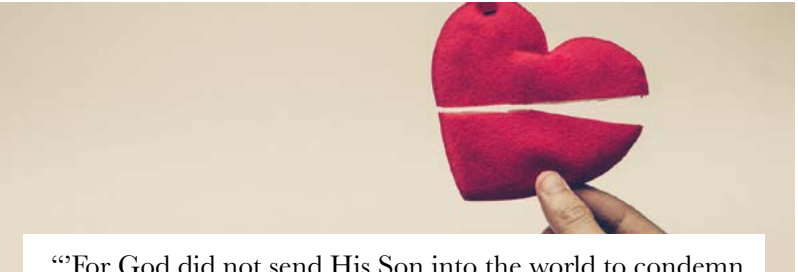
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*In the face of life's setbacks, I want to lead my family to victory.  
I desire salvation in Christ, which makes me overcome suffering and even death.*



## Food for thought

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“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.’ John 3:17. Looking upon men in their wretchedness, Christ saw that He had a place for them where they could find hope. Wherever He saw human need, He saw an opportunity for uplift. The discouraged and hopeless, those who felt that they were doomed to perish, He met with words of encouragement, not condemnation.”

*Education, p. 79.*

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**T**hat Friday seemed to never end. Mary had followed her Son's trajectory of humiliation, condemnation, and unjust punishment throughout the day. Now, she was facing, perhaps, the strongest scene of all: Jesus hanging on the cross, gasping in His last moments of life. It's not the kind of thing a mother should witness. It's impossible to describe Mary's pain!

At that moment, Christ looked at her and, realizing her suffering, entrusted His disciple John, who was present, with the task of taking care of her as a mother (John 19:25-26). He knew that only family comfort could alleviate that pain.

There is no perfect life that does not go through moments of suffering and anguish. But it is in difficult times that people realize how much they need each other, whether to heal a pain, receive advice, or seek material help, and how much they need God. It is in these moments that bonds are strengthened, in the hope of an extra strength.

Just as Christ provided care for His mother, God never abandoned His children. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is full of experiences that show God acting in favor of human suffering, not only speaking words of hope but transferring His comforting embrace through angels and people.

Even today, God is not indifferent to us.



He is always attentive to our losses, our frustrated plans, our anxieties, and our feelings of helplessness. Not only with promises of an end to all of this, but He takes care of us through our loved ones. Likewise, God uses us to support, comfort, and guide the people around us.

Family and friends are God's concrete embrace extended to us. When we allow ourselves to be used in favor of the happiness of others, asking God for wisdom, love, and empathy to deal with others, blessings begin to manifest in our own lives in the form of joy, satisfaction, and learning. Enjoy this blessing!

#### **From conversation to practice**

- In the family, read the second chapter of the book *Social Benevolence* by Ellen G. White. Identify how Christ can use you in favor of others. Also, consider reading the entire work and extracting other valuable lessons.
- Get to know your family members' dreams, frustrations, and annoyances. Remind them constantly of your willingness to help and support them. Also, do not hesitate to share your feelings with them. Family members need to feel and transmit strength to fight for each other's achievements, confidence to share burdens, and comfort in difficult times.

In your family prayers, give your dreams and sufferings to God. Develop trust and patience, allowing Him to act in your life according to His will.

## Lesson 11

# Eight Laws for Families to Live Better

Among the main diseases that currently kill and disable the most in the world are those related to lifestyle such as hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Incorrect lifestyle habits have brought suffering to many families. The issue of disease prevention has been one of the biggest focuses in the fight for health.

## You and your family

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# 1

**The popular proverb “prevention is the best medicine” is well known. Science has increasingly proven this statement every day. What can we do to prevent diseases?**

- Genesis 2:7 \_\_\_\_\_  
Deep breathing is a great relaxant.
- Genesis 1:3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Without light, there is no life. It allows the body to produce vitamin D.
- Isaiah 21:14 \_\_\_\_\_  
Our body is made up of about 70% water. It helps in cleansing the body.

# 2

**You are what you eat. Good nutrition is essential for healthy and joyful life.**

- Proverbs 23:29-32 \_\_\_\_\_  
The use of alcoholic beverages and stimulants can overload the body and cause long-term damage.

- Genesis 1:29 \_\_\_\_\_  
The use of vegetables in our diet increases longevity.
- Leviticus 11:1, 4, 6, 7, 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
God selected which meats could be consumed by humans.
- Genesis 2:15 \_\_\_\_\_  
God created humans for a life of activity. A sedentary lifestyle is a health risk.
- Psalm 127:2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Without adequate sleep, our immune system becomes weakened.
- 1 Corinthians 9:25 \_\_\_\_\_  
Lack of self-control in eating and drinking has destroyed many homes.

## Your Family and God

# 1

### Proverbs 3:5-6

People who trust in God often face illness with more vigor and can rely on His power for restoration. Satan uses suffering to drive people away from God (Job 2:7), but we can pray to God for healing of our illnesses and our loved ones (James 5:14-16). We also need to learn to accept God's will for our lives (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). Above all, God wants our salvation, even more than physical healing.

# 2

### What other advice can we find in the Word of God about our lifestyle?

- Proverbs 17:22 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Timothy 2:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- Philippians 4:8 \_\_\_\_\_
- Our body is made up of about 70% water. It helps in cleansing the body. \_\_\_\_\_



# 3

**What principle should govern Christian conduct?** 1 Corinthians 10:31

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## Family decision

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*I want our family to be healthy. That's why I will use  
God's remedies in my home.*

*I desire to honor the Lord in my body, doing all things for His honor and glory.*



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## Food for thought

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“Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power--these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them. It is essential both to understand the principles involved in the treatment of the sick and to have a practical training that will enable one rightly to use this knowledge.”

*Ministry of Healing, p. 127.*

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**I**magine the reaction of the young people at the table. While they enjoyed that banquet full of delicacies that the king had ordered to be served to them, those four individuals in the corner only ate vegetables and drank water. “They must be being punished for some mistake, or paying some penance, doing some kind of experiment, or maybe they’re just crazy,” the others could think.

In fact, it was a very conscious choice of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to abstain from the extravagant food that was served at the Babylonian court (Daniel 1:5-20). Although they were in captivity, they did not forget the health principles they learned at home in Jerusalem. They maintained good habits until the king summoned all those young men to serve in his personal council. Contrary to expectations, those four “crazy” men stood out not only for their vigorous appearance but also for their intelligence and superior reasoning.

Health. If this were not an important topic, it would not be so recurrent in the Bible. Since Eden, God has left guidance for man on healthy habits. And when God determines something, it is not to see His creatures suffering from deprivations and abstinences. On the contrary! He created our bodies, so He knows the best way to make them function well. It’s like a car manufacturer who knows exactly which fuel will provide the best performance for that model.

Adam and Eve had everything they needed in the garden. Natural foods, the sun in the right measure, pure air, drinkable water flowing in the springs, contact

with nature, an active routine but without stress, pleasant nights of sleep, and a privileged personal encounter with God daily. If sin had not invaded this reality, they would still be living in the same way, with equal vigor and youth, without any harm to their body or mind.

Even with sin and its consequences, the Creator’s guidelines for our health remain the best option, mitigating and delaying the effects of evil on us. Those famous “grandma’s remedies” may work well, but the “Father’s recipe” not only cures diseases but also helps prevent them and gives us more energy.

This recipe mixes eight very simple ingredients: natural and balanced nutrition, sunlight, water, fresh air, common sense and temperance, quality sleep, physical activity, and communion with God.

Why not make this a traditional recipe in your family?

### **From conversation to action**

- Spend frequent time as a family doing outdoor activities, where you can enjoy contact with nature and exercise your body.
- Promote healthy meals. If possible, prepare them together, as this moment of food preparation can be as good for socializing as the mealtime.
- Discourage the use of electronic devices while together. Enjoy each other’s company, interact, and strengthen relationships.
- Do not give up family worship. God needs to be at the center of both family and personal life.

## Lesson 12

# The Financial Health of the Home

One of the most sensitive areas in family life, which often causes many problems, is the issue of money usage. Many couples struggle to deal with financial matters, resulting in arguments, misunderstandings, and hurt feelings. What can be done to ensure that the home is financially healthy?

## You and Your Family

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### 1

**The Bible offers some principles about the use of money that can help the family organize in this area and experience happiness:**

- 1 Timothy 6:6-8  
Due to all the consumer advertising, we often find ourselves wanting to have more things in our home, and we are never satisfied. We need to learn to be content with what we have and only buy something when we have the available resources and it is truly necessary.
- Romans 13:7-8  
We should learn to avoid making purchases on credit. By learning to save, we can obtain discounts instead of paying interest for long periods of time.
- 1 Timothy 6:9-10  
The money earned from work should serve the family, not the other way around. Many people become so preoccupied with getting rich that they sacrifice their family and those around them.
- Proverbs 22:6  
One of the valuable lessons a parent can teach their child is how to handle money.
- Proverbs 22:7  
Be cautious with loans, credit cards, and overdrafts.

# Your Family and God

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God entrusts us with resources so that we can use them well. In the Garden of Eden, God told Adam that he would be the steward of that garden and would derive his sustenance from it (Genesis 1:26-29). He provides for His children (Psalm 37:25).

1

**What does Jesus say about the use of money?** Matthew 6:21

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2

**God expects us to honor Him with the money we receive. What can we do?**

- Proverbs 19:17  
We should selflessly help those who are in need.
- Proverbs 3:9  
We can worship God with our possessions. When Zacchaeus accepted Christ, he voluntarily sought to make amends for the wrongs he had done in the past by giving back four times what he had taken unjustly from others (Luke 19:8).
- Malachi 3:10  
Another way to worship God is through tithes and offerings. By acknowledging God's blessings in your life, you create room for Him to continue blessing you even more. In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus reminds us that He wants to bless us through the resources He has entrusted to us.

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## Family Decision

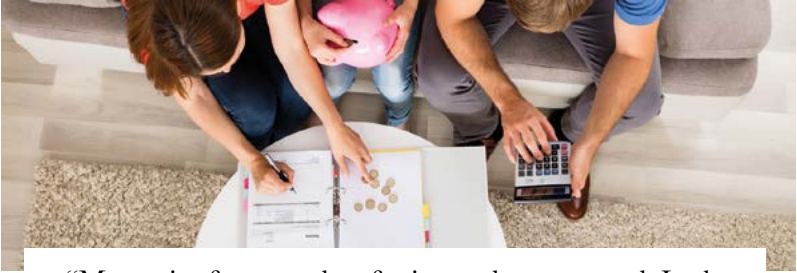
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*I desire to make the resources placed in my hands by God a blessing to my family. I decide to worship God through the goods and resources He has given me.*



# Food for thought

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“Money is of great value, for it can do great good. In the hands of God’s children, it is food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, clothing for the naked. It is protection for the oppressed and a means to aid the sick. But money is of no greater value than sand unless we use it to provide for the necessities of life, for the blessing of others, and for the advancement of the work of Christ.”

*Parables of Jesus, p. 351.*

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**E**veryone wanted to be with him. Of course! He was cool, funding all the parties, knowing how to enjoy life! Suddenly, the country went into recession. But this group of friends didn’t even worry, after all, the “cool guy” would finance another season of abundance for everyone, right? That’s not what happened. That young man had been very audacious to ask his still living father to divide the inheritance. Taking the money, he left home determined to enjoy all the pleasures within his reach. But what he had in enthusiasm, he lacked in common sense and strategy. He squandered all his fortune, didn’t invest in anything. Now, he was penniless,

and his friends had distanced themselves, and his only way out was to humble himself and seek refuge in his father’s house.

Money has always been one of Satan’s great strategies to destroy lives and entire families. And he knows how to manage each specific situation very well. He takes advantage of situations of financial scarcity to destabilize relationships, promote discord, and cause suffering and resentment. In times of abundance, he feeds pride, selfishness, and greed, leading people to sacrifice fundamental things in an insatiable pursuit of more wealth. Through the misuse of money, he leads people to ruin, despair, and helplessness.

Therefore, it is essential to handle fami-

ly finances with great wisdom, regardless of their economic level. All family members need to understand that the family should not serve money, but money should serve the family. The love of material possessions should never be greater than the love that unites people.

There is no way to talk about finances without emphasizing the importance of organization and strategy. The Word of God itself affirms this relevance: “For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?” (Luke 14:28).

A healthy budget is based on basic needs and priorities. Yes, it is essential to establish priorities! It should be designed to include savings, avoiding stress and despair in times of crisis or emergency. Equally important, this budget should be fair, providing well-being to all equally, without harming or favoring anyone.

Finally, the family budget should also consider the realization of dreams because the family is the primary envi-

ronment for personal and collective development. It is from the family that the best memories of life’s great achievements should come.

### **From conversation to practice:**

- Organize the family budget and create short-term, medium-term, and long-term financial plans. Consider priorities, day-to-day expenses, and future plans. Never spend more than you earn, and always have an emergency fund.
- Cultivate a culture of utility, not consumerism. Before buying something, ask yourself, “Do I really need this? Or is this purchase only to satisfy a momentary desire?”
- Entrust your family’s finances to God. Be faithful in tithes and honor your commitments. “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need” (Malachi 3:10).



## Lesson 13

# The Serving Family

Every human being is born with a sense of belonging. They desire to know that they belong to something greater than themselves. Throughout life, we establish bonds that are vital to our development and happiness. However, due to the busyness of our days, we have isolated ourselves from these precious connections, and the result is that we live in an increasingly unbalanced society.

## You and your family

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Psychological offices are filled with people who have failed to adjust in their relationships. When the ideal for the family is achieved, it assumes a restorative role.

1

**What did Jesus say about forgiveness among brothers?** Matthew 18:22

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Jesus' response indicates that the mind and heart should be open, failures may arise, mistakes may happen, but one should always be ready to forgive and see that they are better off with their family than without them.

2

**What did the prodigal son do when he ran out of money?** Luke 15:18-20

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Upon returning, he found the support of his father and the distrust of his older brother. But home was the place where he felt safe, even if everything wasn't perfect.

# 3

**What can we do to have a family that offers support to its members?**

- Matthew 7:3-5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Before criticizing others, examine your own heart.
- Matthew 5:23-24 \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't just act formally to make others think you are good, but genuinely seek to cultivate a good relationship.
- Matthew 15:5-6 \_\_\_\_\_  
Take care of your own family according to your abilities and the needs of each person. Don't forget about your parents.  
Life without love is worthless (1 Corinthians 13:3).
- Matthew 7:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
Strive to create a home where each person has an attitude of selfless service towards others.

## Your family and God

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God has provided a family for us to find support in every moment (Ephesians 2:19). Your family is not alone!

# 1

**What should be the main characteristic of a disciple of Christ? John 13:35**

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# 2

**What should each member of the family of God be occupied with?**

- Ephesians 4:15-16 \_\_\_\_\_
- Hebrews 3:13 \_\_\_\_\_



3

**What does the Holy Spirit offer to this family so that we may serve one another?** 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

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The gifts are diverse, and the Holy Spirit chooses which gifts to give to each person as He desires.

4

**What gift would be present in the church in the end times?**  
Revelation 12:17, Revelation 19:10

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In the face of the world's separation from God, He would send prophets to lead people back to His Word, the Bible.

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## Family decision

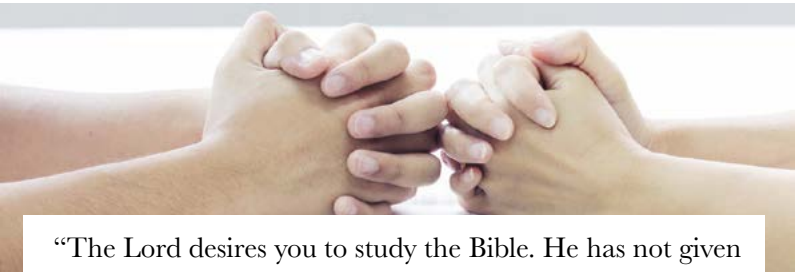
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*I desire to serve my family. I desire to use the gifts that God has given me to edify others.*



Food for thought

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“The Lord desires you to study the Bible. He has not given any additional light to take the place of His Word. This light must lead confused minds to His Word, which, if eaten and assimilated, is as the lifeblood of the soul. Then good works will be seen as a light shining in darkness.”

*Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 29*

**D**espite having squandered all the inheritance he had received, he knew that he still had the unconditional love of his father. Yes, we are still talking about the prodigal son, as we can extract another valuable lesson from this story.

He was not so presumptuous as to think that, upon returning home, he would be received with all honors and greetings. He knew he had done wrong, but he hoped to find in his family a trace of mercy to accept him back as one of the servants in the house. Either way, this shows trust and a sense of belonging that he could not find outside the family circle.

What a pleasant surprise he had when his father, seeing him approaching the house, ragged and ashamed, ran to embrace him and welcome him with the same love as always! It was at that moment that he understood the true meaning of family: an unconditional refuge.

We all make mistakes. No matter how well-intentioned and careful we may be, we are prone to disappoint others and be disappointed ourselves. But it is in these moments that God expects from us the understanding that He himself demonstrated for fallen humanity, forgiving and seeking reconciliation.

It is true that, for us humans, it is difficult to fully trust someone who has disappointed us. That is natural; it is self-defense to avoid further disappointments. But forgiveness goes beyond trust. Forgiving is freeing the other person and freeing oneself from a corrosive and suffocating feeling. Both forgiveness and trust are too complex for a human being to achieve on their own, but God promises wisdom and strength to those who are

willing to selflessly strive for the well-being of all (Philippians 2:13).

Notice also, in the story of the prodigal son, that the father, upon receiving his son back, provides all the means for him to feel welcomed. Even before the welcome feast, he made sure to meet the young man's basic needs at that moment, such as clean clothes and sandals for his feet. This is a great lesson in humility and attentiveness! We need to be attentive to what others need and serve selflessly, without expecting anything in return.

In the model prayer (Luke 11:2-4), Christ taught us that before we seek forgiveness from God for our sins, we must offer it to anyone who has wronged us. Without specifying the type of offense or whom we should forgive, He shows us that the love of God should prevail in us, above all pride and resentment.

### **From conversation to practice**

In the family worship, read chapter 6 of the book "The Ministry of Healing" by Ellen G. White. Notice, in the attitudes of Jesus mentioned in the text, how He valued human beings and treated them with unconditional love. Discuss the attitude that God expects us to have towards our fellow human beings.

Reflect on whether there is anyone in your family with whom you have any unresolved issues; someone who has wronged you, or vice versa. Seek understanding and reconciliation through dialogue, being willing to forgive completely or demonstrate your sincere repentance. Allow yourself and the other person to be liberated from all hurt and resentment, and develop a relationship of peace as Christ desires.

## Lesson 14

### An Eternal Covenant

One of the most important elements of marriage is the vows that the bride and groom make, affirming their desire to remain by each other's side for their entire lives and in any and every situation, with love, honor, and respect. It is certainly a significant step, yet many have lost the value of these words.

## You and your family

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Jesus had a special interest in marriage. His first miracle took place at a wedding feast. It is true that many marriages need a miracle. But if Christ did it in the past, He can also transform lives. What can be done to revitalize the commitment established at the altar?

# 1

- 1 Corinthians 11:8, 11, 12 \_\_\_\_\_  
Make your relationship a commitment, not an experiment to see if it will work out. For a marriage to succeed, it must be remembered that man and woman depend on each other.
- Hebrews 13:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Even our sexuality should be a reason for honor to God. Instead of the pornographic appeals of our day, the intimacy of the couple should illustrate the intimate relationship that God wants to have with His people.
- 1 Corinthians 7:4-5 \_\_\_\_\_  
The couple should communicate with each other about the issue of sex so that the enemy does not find an opportunity to tempt either spouse.
- Ephesians 5:31 \_\_\_\_\_  
The biblical order is for the newlywed couple to leave their father and mother to form a new home. Many relationships encounter difficulties due to interference from relatives.

• Song of Solomon 8:6

“To set as a seal upon your heart” means that your heart already has an owner. It is necessary to daily affirm your love for him/her. However, be careful with jealousy. A little bit of jealousy is normal, but excessive jealousy can cause significant difficulties.

## Your family and God

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Jesus also wants to establish an individual covenant with you.

1

**What is Jesus' calling?** John 1:43

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2

**What does this calling imply?** Matthew 16:24

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3

**What decision does the Lord expect from us?** Joshua 24:15

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Noah accepted God's calling and built an ark, through which he saved his household (Hebrews 11:7). We should invest time to save our family. Accepting the covenant with God is an act of will.

4

**How is the covenant with God established?** Mark 16:15 and 16

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5

**What is baptism?** Romans 6:4

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Biblical baptism represents the death to an old life and the birth to a new life in Christ, which is why it is done by immersion.

6

**Which covenant is fundamental for the salvation of the family?**

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Acts 16:30-34

God values the family, as He was its Creator. God wants to establish a covenant of salvation with your entire family (1 Timothy 2:4).

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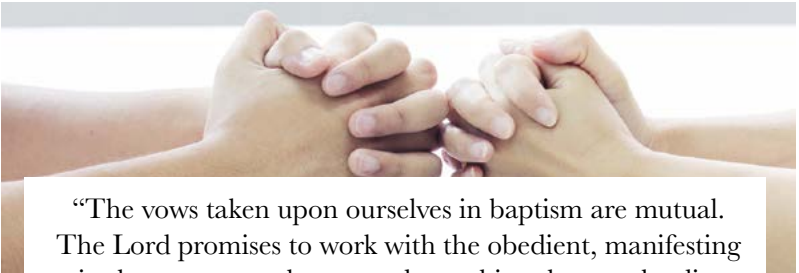
## Family decision

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*I desire to renew the covenant made with my spouse.  
I desire, through baptism, to establish a covenant with Christ.*



## Food for thought



“The vows taken upon ourselves in baptism are mutual. The Lord promises to work with the obedient, manifesting in them a power that exceeds anything that can be displayed by those who do not know Christ. The fact that we have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is a guarantee that these powers will co-operate with us in all our straits and conflicts whenever we call upon them.”

*Faith I Live By, p. 145.*

**H**ave you noticed how the Bible values marriage? It's no wonder that the story of humanity begins with a couple, instituted by God. It's also no wonder that Jesus' first miracle was performed at a wedding. Christ Himself compares His people to a bride, whom He is going to meet to dwell with forever. If He makes this association with a race for whom He gave His own life, then marriage must indeed be a very serious commitment!

It doesn't take much effort to notice that there is a global crisis ruining marriages. Satan knows that by destroying a couple's relationship, he can shake the entire family and, consequently, the whole society. That's why he has specialized in tactics to wear down established relationships and prevent them from materializing. We have examples such as addictions, suffocating routines, infidelity, pornography, homosexuality, and more.

On the other hand, God works vigorously to maintain purity and peace in homes. He not only has the power to unite people and bless them to be happy together, but He is also mighty to restore what has been destroyed by evil. Therefore, for young people seeking a happy and prosperous marriage, as well as for a crumbling marriage longing to regain its peace, it is necessary to seek the presence of God and for both husband and wife to be willing to align with His will and purposes for the home.

“Christ did not come into the world to forbid marriage, to break up or destroy the relationships and the influence that exist in the home circle. He came to restore, elevate, purify, and ennoble every current of pure affection so that the family on earth might become a symbol of the family in heaven” (Christ's Triumph, Ellen White, page 477).

Marriage is the foundation of every family. And of course, for it to develop well, it needs to start well. Therefore, it is from the union of the couple that the values that will accompany the entire family in the future must prevail. This relationship should be based on a commitment of love, trust, understanding, humility, respect, companionship, perpetuity, and fear of God.

Similarly, just as in marriage, baptism represents a commitment, an eternal covenant with God. It is when a person, recognizing their sin, surrenders themselves into the care of the Creator, acknowledging their dependence on Him. This covenant should also be based on love, companionship, trust, respect, and faithfulness. And God will honor this commitment when, fulfilling His promise, He comes to gather His people to live together, “happily ever after”!

#### **From conversation to practice:**

Continually renew your vows of love and fidelity with your spouse. Dedicate quality time alone together every day for conversation and leisure.

Make it a habit as a couple to pray together. In these moments, spiritual purposes unite, and it is possible to deepen your understanding of each other's relationship with God.

As a family, read the book “The Adventist Home” by Ellen G. White. In addition to many lessons for a good marital relationship, the work clearly presents God's purposes for the entire family.





Seventh-day  
Adventist Church