

Peace In Your Household

A Catholic Guide To Family Happiness

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Australian Catholic Truth Society No.1803a (1986)

HAPPY are those who belong to families in which there is love, understanding, and peace. Hopefully, yours is such a family. Sad to say, countless families fail to fit that description and are divided for one reason or another. What divides households? In this chapter we will discuss three things.

In some families, members do not all share the same religion.

In others, the children may not have the same biological parents.

In still others, the struggle to make a living or the desire for more material things seems to force family members apart.

Yet, circumstances that divide one household may not affect another. What makes the difference?

Review Question. What are some things that may cause divisions in families?

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

What makes the difference?

Viewpoint is one factor. If you sincerely try to understand the other person's point of view, you are more likely to discern how to preserve a united household.

A second factor is your source of guidance.

Many people follow the advice of work-mates, neighbors, newspaper columnists, or other human guides. Some, though, have found out what God's Word says about their situation, and then they applied what they learned. The most successful don't go off half-cocked. They turn to the Catholic Church "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3: 15) to properly understand what the Bible really teaches. How can doing this help a family to maintain peace in a household? – See 2 Timothy 3:16-17 which says: "All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, That the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." "All scripture"... Every part of divine scripture is certainly profitable for all these ends. But, if we would have the whole rule of Christian faith and practice, we must not be content with those Scriptures, which Timothy knew from his infancy, that is, with the Old Testament alone: nor yet with the New Testament, without taking along with it the traditions of the apostles, and the interpretation of the church, to which the apostles delivered both the book, and the true meaning of it.

Review Question. Where do some look for guidance in family life, but what is the best source of such guidance?

Point I) Difference in Religion.

IF YOUR HUSBAND HAS A DIFFERENT FAITH.

MAINTAIN PEACE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

The Bible strongly counsels us against marrying someone with a different religious faith. (Deuteronomy 7:3-4 says, speaking of the pagan inhabitants of the Promised Land: "Neither shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for your son: For she will turn away your son from following me, that he may rather serve strange gods, and the wrath of the Lord will be kindled, and will quickly destroy you." 1 Corinthians 7:39 says: "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband die, she is at liberty: let her marry to whom she will; only in the Lord.") It is for this reason that the Catholic Church so actively discourages 'Mixed Marriages'. It may be, however, that you learned the truth from the Bible and about the true Church which Christ Himself built, our precious Catholic Church, only after your marriage but your husband did not. What then? Of course, the marriage vows still hold. (1 Corinthians 7:10 says "But to them that are married, not I but the Lord commands, that the wife depart not from her husband.") The Bible emphasizes the permanence of the marriage bond and encourages married people to work out their differences rather than to run away from them. (Ephesians 5:28-31 says: "So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife, loves himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, as also Christ doth the church: Because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." Titus 2:4-5 tells us: "That they [the older women] may teach the young women to be wise, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, sober, having a care of the house, gentle, obedient to their husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.")

What, though, if your husband strongly objects to your practicing the religion of the Bible and be a devout Catholic as one should? He may try to hinder you from going to Mass on Sundays or attending other Church services and Apostolic meetings, or he may say that he does not want his wife to go from house to house, talking about religion, as all Catholics are encouraged to do to fulfill their calling in the Lay Apostolate. What will you do?

Review Questions.

(a) What is the Bible's counsel regarding marrying one of a different faith?

(b) What are some basic principles that apply if one spouse is a believer and the other is not?

So, what can you do?

Ask yourself, 'Why does my husband feel the way he does?' (Proverbs 16:20, advises "The learned in word shall find good things: and he that trusts in the Lord is blessed." And verse 23 adds "The heart of the wise shall instruct his mouth: and shall add grace to his lips.") If he does not really understand what you are doing, he may worry about you. Or he may be under pressure from relatives because you no longer share in certain pagan customs that are important to them. This is especially the case with recent converts from Non-Christian traditions "Alone in the house, I felt deserted," said one husband. This man felt that he was losing his wife to a religion. Yet pride kept him from admitting that he was lonely. Your husband may need the reassurance that your love for God our Father does not mean that you now love your husband less than you did in the past. Be sure to spend time with him.

Review Question. In what way can a wife show empathy if her husband does not share her faith?

HANDY HINT.

Try to understand the other person's viewpoint.

However, something even more important must be considered if you are going to deal with the situation wisely. God's Word urges wives: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as it behooves [is becoming] in the Lord." (Colossians 3:18) Thus, it cautions against a spirit of independence. In addition, by saying "as it behooves and is becoming in the Lord," this scripture indicates that subjection to one's husband should also take into consideration subjection to the Lord. There has to be a balance.

Review Question. What balance must be kept by the wife whose husband is of a different faith?

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

For a Christian, attending Church for Mass and other liturgies and meetings and witnessing to others about one's Bible-based faith are important aspects of true worship that are not to be neglected. (See Romans 10:9-10, & verse 14 which says: "For if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised him up from the dead, you shall be saved. [To confess the Lord Jesus, and to call upon the name of the Lord is not barely the professing a belief in the person of Christ; but moreover, implies a belief of his whole doctrine, and an obedience to his law; without which, the calling him Lord will save no man as we are reminded elsewhere in. St. Matthew. 7: 21.] For, with the heart, we believe unto justice; but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation. [And ...] For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent?" Hebrews 10:24-25 says: "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto charity and to good works: Not forsaking our 'assembly' ['our church', for Mass], as some are accustomed; but comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.") What would you do, then, if a human directly commanded you not to comply with a specific requirement of God? The first pope, Saint Peter, and the other apostles of Jesus Christ declared: "We ought to obey God, rather than men." (Acts 5:29) Their example provides a precedent that is applicable to many situations in life. Will love for God, our Father and Jesus His Son move you to render to him the devotion that rightly belongs to him? At the same time, will your love and respect for your husband cause you to try to do this in a way that is acceptable to him? – (Recall Matthew 4:10: "Jesus said to him: Begone, Satan: for it is written, The Lord your God shall you adore, and him only shall you serve." 1 John 5:3 reminds us; "For this is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not heavy.")

Review Question. What principles should be kept in mind by a Christian wife?

MAINTAIN PEACE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

Try to explain things to your husband in a way that is acceptable to him. Jesus noted that this would not always be possible. He warned that because of opposition to true worship, believing members of some families would feel cut off, as if a sword had come between them and the rest of the family. (Do you remember Matthew 10:34-36? Jesus said: "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's

enemies shall be they of his own household. [Not that this was the end or design of the coming of our Saviour; but that his coming and his doctrine would have this effect, by reason of the obstinate resistance that many would make, and of their persecuting all such as should adhere to him.] A woman in Taiwan experienced this. She was opposed by her husband for 11 years. He harshly mistreated her and frequently locked her out of the house. But she persevered. Friends in the parish congregation helped her. She prayed incessantly and drew much encouragement from 1 Peter 2:20 which says: "For what glory is it, if, committing sin, and being buffeted for it, you endure? But if doing well you suffer patiently; this is thankworthy before God." This Christian woman and devout Catholic was convinced that if she remained firm, someday her husband would join her in serving God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. And he did.

Review Question. What determination must a Christian wife have?

There are many practical things you can do to affect your mate's attitude. For example, if your husband objects to your religion, do not give him valid causes for complaint in other areas. Keep the home clean. Care for your personal appearance. Be generous with expressions of love and appreciation. Instead of criticizing, be supportive. Show that you look to him for headship. Do not retaliate if you feel you have been wronged. (1 Peter 2:21-23 says: "For unto this are you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly.) Make allowances for human imperfection, and if a dispute arises, humbly be the first to apologize. – See Ephesians 4:26 which says: "Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger."

Do not let your attendance at Mass or other meetings be a reason for his meals being late. You may also choose to share in the works of Christian ministry and the lay apostolate at times when your husband is not at home. It is wise for a good Catholic wife to refrain from preaching to her husband when this is unwelcome. Rather, she follows the apostle Peter's counsel: "In like manner also let wives be subject to their husbands: that if any believe not the word, they may be won without the word, by the conversation and conduct of the wives. Considering your chaste conversation and conduct with fear and deep respect." (1 Peter 3:1-2) Let good Catholic wives work on more fully manifesting the fruits of God's spirit. - Galatians 5:22-23 mentions them.

Review Question. How should a wife act to avoid putting unnecessary obstacles before her husband?

WHEN THE WIFE IS NOT A PRACTICING CHRISTIAN.

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

What if the husband is the practicing Christian and the wife is not? The Bible gives direction for such situations. It says: "If any brother has a wife that believes not, and she consent to dwell with him, let him not put her away." (1 Corinthians 7:12).

It also admonishes husbands:

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter towards them." - Colossians 3:19.

Review Question. How should a believing husband act toward his wife if she is of a different persuasion?

If you are the husband of a wife with a faith different from yours, be especially careful to show respect for your wife and consideration for her feelings. As an adult, she deserves a measure of freedom to practice her religious beliefs, even if you disagree with them. The first time you talk to her about your faith, do not expect her to discard long-held beliefs in favor of something new. Instead of abruptly saying that practices she and her family have cherished for a long time are false, patiently endeavor to reason with her from the Scriptures and with the aid of the many Catholic resources now available on the Internet. It may be that she feels neglected if you devote a great deal of time to the activities of the Church and parish. She may oppose your efforts to serve God our Father, yet the basic message may simply be: "I need more of your time!" Be patient. With your loving consideration, in time she may be helped to embrace true worship in God's own Church. - Colossians 3:12-14 reminds us: "All of you, put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the heart of mercy, kindness, humility, modesty, patience: Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord has forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection." 1 Peter 3:8-9. Tells us: "And in fine, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble: Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing: for unto this are you called, that you may inherit a blessing."

Review Question. How can a husband show discernment and tactfully exercise headship over his wife if she is not a practicing Christian?

TRAINING THE CHILDREN.

MAINTAIN PEACE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

In a household that is not united in worship, religious instruction of the children sometimes becomes an issue. How should Catholic and Scriptural principles be applied? The Bible assigns the father primary responsibility for instructing the children, but the mother also has an important role to play. (Proverbs 1:8 says "My son, hear the instruction of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother." Compare this with Genesis 18:19 where God speaks of Abraham: "For I know that he will command his children, and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord, and do judgment and justice: that for Abraham's sake the Lord may bring to effect all the things he has spoken unto him." Deuteronomy 11:18-19 instructs parents: "Lay up these my words in your hearts and minds, and hang them for a sign on your hands, and place them between your eyes. Teach your children that they meditate on them, when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the way, and when you lie down and rise up.") Even if he does not accept the headship of Christ, the father is still the family head.

Review Question. Even if a husband and his wife are of different faiths, how should Scriptural principles be applied in the training of their children?

Some unbelieving fathers do not object if the mother instructs the children in religious matters. Others do. What if your husband refuses to permit you to take the children to Mass or even forbids you to study the Bible and their catechism with them at home? Now you have to balance a number of obligations - your obligation to the Lord God our Father, to your husbandly head, and to your beloved children. How can you reconcile these?

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

Certainly you will pray about the matter. (Philippians 4:6-7 says: "Be nothing solicitous; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus". 1 John 5:14 says: "And this is the confidence which we have towards him: That, whatsoever we shall ask according to his will, he hears us.") But in the end, you are the one who must decide what course to take. If you proceed with tact, making it clear to your husband that you are not challenging his headship, his opposition may eventually lessen. Even if your husband forbids you to take your children to Mass or to have a formal Bible study and catechism lessons with them, you can still teach them. By your daily conversation and your good example, try to inculcate in them a degree of love for God our Father, faith in his Word, respect for parents- including their father-loving concern for other people, and appreciation for conscientious work habits. In time, the father may notice the good results and may appreciate the value of your efforts. - Proverbs 23:24 teaches us: "The father of the just rejoices greatly: he that has begotten a wise son, shall have joy in him."

Review Question. If the husband forbids his wife to take the children to Church for Mass or even to study with them, what can she do?

If you are a husband who is a believer and your wife is not, then you must shoulder the responsibility to bring up your children, as Scripture says: "And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4) While doing so, you should, of course, be kind, loving, and reasonable in dealing with your wife.

Review Question. What is the responsibility of a believing father in the education of the children?

IF YOUR RELIGION IS NOT THAT OF YOUR PARENTS.

It is no longer uncommon for even minor children to embrace religious views that are different from those of their parents. Have you done that? Have you recently accepted the truths of the Catholic Church? If so, the Bible has counsel for you.

God's Word says: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just. 'Honor your father and your mother', which is the first commandment with a promise." (Ephesians 6: 1-2) That involves wholesome respect for parents. However, while obedience to parents is important, it must not be rendered without regard for the true God and His Religion. When a child gets old enough to begin making decisions, he bears an increased measure of responsibility for his actions. This is true not only with regard to secular law but especially concerning divine law. "Therefore every one of us shall render account to God for himself," the Bible states. - Romans 14:12.

Review Question. What Bible principles must children remember if they accept a faith different from that of their parents?

MAINTAIN PEACE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

If your beliefs cause you to make changes in your life, try to understand your parents' point of view. They will likely be pleased if, as a result of your learning and applying Bible teachings, you become more respectful, more obedient, more diligent in what they ask of you. However, if your new faith also causes you to reject beliefs and customs that they personally cherish, they may feel that you are spurning a heritage that they sought to give you. They may also fear for your welfare if what you are doing is not popular in the community or if it diverts your attention from pursuits that they feel

could help you to prosper materially. Pride could also be a barrier. They may feel that you are, in effect, saying that you are right and they are wrong.

As soon as possible, therefore, try to arrange for your parents to meet some of the priests, teachers or other mature Catholics from the local congregation or parish. Encourage your parents to visit a Catholic Church to see and hear for themselves what is done and discussed and to see firsthand what sort of people good Catholics are. In time, your parents' attitude may soften. Even when parents are adamantly opposed, destroy Bibles, Prayer books and Bible literature, and even forbid children to attend Mass or other Catholic services and meetings, there usually are opportunities to read elsewhere, to talk to fellow Catholics, and to witness to and help others informally. You can also pray to God our Father. Some youths have to wait until they are old enough to live outside the family home before they can do more. Whatever the situation at home, however, do not forget to "honor your father and your mother." Do your part to contribute to peace in the home. (Romans 12:17-18 tells us: "To no man rendering evil for evil. Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men.") Above all, pursue peace with God.

Review Question. If children have a religion that is different from that of their parents, how can they help their parents to understand their faith better?

Point II) Step-parenting.

THE CHALLENGE OF BEING A STEPPARENT.

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

In many homes the situation that presents the greatest challenge is not religious but biological. Many households today include children from previous marriages of one or both of the parents. In such a family, children may experience jealousy and resentment or perhaps a conflict of loyalties. As a result, they may rebuff the sincere efforts of the step-parent to be a good father or mother. What can help to make a stepfamily successful?

Review Question. What feelings may children have if their father or mother is a stepparent?

Well, what can help to make a stepfamily successful?

Realize that in spite of the special circumstances, Bible principles that bring success in other households apply here also. Ignoring those principles may, for the moment, seem to relieve a problem but will likely lead to heartache later. (Remember Psalm 127:1 [Psalm 126:1 in the Vulgate] says: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watches in vain that keeps it." Proverbs 29:15 cautions: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but the child that is left to his own will bring his mother to shame.") Cultivate wisdom and discernment -wisdom to apply godly principles with long-term benefits in mind, and discernment to identify why family members say and do certain things. There is also a need for empathy. - Proverbs 16:21 advises: "The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and he that is sweet in words shall attain to greater things.

Proverbs 24:3 states: "By wisdom the house shall be built, and by prudence it shall be strengthened." You should also look up 1 Peter 3:8.

Review Question. Despite their special circumstances, why should stepparents look to principles found in the Bible for help?

MAINTAIN PEACE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

If you are a stepparent, you may recall that as a friend of the family, you were perhaps welcomed by the children. But when you became their stepparent, their attitude may have changed. Remembering the biological parent who is no longer living, (or who is no longer living with them if the children are the victims of an annulled marriage), the children may be struggling with a conflict of loyalties, possibly feeling that you want to take away the affection that they have for the absent parent. At times, they might bluntly remind you that you are not their father or their mother. Such statements hurt. Still, "Better is the patient man than the presumptuous. Be not quickly angry: for anger rests in the bosom of a fool." (Ecclesiastes 7:9[& 10]) Discernment and empathy are needed in order to deal with the children's emotions.

Review Question. Why may children find it difficult to accept a step-parent?

Those qualities of empathy and discernment are crucial when one is administering discipline. Consistent discipline is vital. (Proverbs 6:20 repeats the proverb we first heard in Proverbs 1: 8 namely: "My son, keep the commandments of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother." Proverbs 13:1 reads: "A wise son hears the doctrine of his father: but he that is a scorner, bears not when he is reproved.") And since children are not all the same, discipline may differ from one case to another. Some stepparents find that, at least to start with, it may be better for the biological parent to handle this aspect of parenting. It is essential, though, that both parents agree on the discipline and uphold it, not favoring a natural offspring over a stepchild. (Proverbs 24:23 says: "These also are sayings of the wise: Partiality in judging is not good.") Obedience is important, but allowances for imperfection need to be made. Do not overreact. Discipline in love. - Colossians 3:21 reminds us: "Fathers, provoke not your children to indignation, lest they be discouraged."

Review Question. How may discipline be handled in a family with step-children?

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

Family discussions can do much to head off trouble. These can help the family to keep in focus the most important matters in life. (Compare Philippians 1:9-11 which says: "And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: That you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, Filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God..) They can also assist each one to see how he can contribute toward attaining family goals. In addition, frank family discussions can avert moral problems. Girls need to understand how to dress and comport themselves around their stepfather and any stepbrothers, and boys need counsel on proper conduct toward their stepmother and any stepsisters. - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 teaches us much: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from fornication; That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel [his body] in sanctification and honor: Not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles that know not God: And that no man overreach, nor circumvent his brother in business or in these matters: because the Lord is the avenger of all these things, as we have told you before, and have testified. For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification. Therefore, he that despises these things, despises not man, but God, who also has given his Holy Spirit in us."

Review Question. What can help to avert moral problems between members of the opposite sex in a stepfamily?

MAINTAIN PEACE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

In meeting the special challenge of being a step-parent, be patient. It takes time to develop new relationships. Earning the love and respect of children with whom you have no biological bond can be a formidable task. But it is possible. A wise and discerning heart, coupled with a strong desire to please God our Father, is the key to peace in a stepfamily. (Proverbs 16:20 assures us: “The learned in word shall find good things: and he that trusts in the Lord is blessed.”) Such qualities can also help you to cope with other situations.

Review Question. What qualities can help keep peace in a step-family?

HANDY HINT.

Whether a natural parent or a stepparent, rely on the Bible for guidance.

A NOTE: -

PROPER MARRIAGES BRING DIGNITY AND PEACE.

PROPER MARRIAGES ARE SACRAMENTAL MARRIAGES.

In our day many men and women live together as husband and wife without any legal commitment. This is a situation that a new believer may have to deal with. In some instances the union may be approved by community or tribal custom, but it is not legal. The Bible standard, however, requires a properly registered marriage. (Titus 3:1, for instance obliges the Christian to acknowledge lawful authority, and therefore to register the marriage properly: “Admonish them to be subject to princes and powers, to obey at a word, to be ready to every good work.” Hebrews 13:4 admonishes: “Let marriage be honorable in all things and the bed undefiled. For fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Ephesians 5:31-32 proclaims that marriage is a great ‘mysterion’ or Sacrament, thus: “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament.”)

For people within the Christian Church, Christ’s one, Holy and Catholic Church, the Bible also stipulates that there be just one husband and one wife in a marriage union. (1 Corinthians 7:2, says: “But for fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” So strictly is this rule part of the Apostolic tradition that in the early ages of the Church the Apostles even insisted that a man would disqualify himself from being ordained deacon’ priest or deacon if he had been married on more than one occasion and his first wife had died, See 1 Timothy 3:2, which says: “It behooves therefore a bishop to be blameless, the husband of one wife, [that is, of no more than one wife,] sober, prudent, of good behavior, chaste, given to hospitality, a teacher” and 3:12 of the same letter states: “Let deacons be the husbands of one wife: who rule well their children, and their own houses.”) Conforming to this standard of faithful monogamy is a first step toward having peace in your home. (Psalm 119:165 [Psalm 118:165 in the Vulgate] encourages us by saying: “Much peace have they that love Your law, and to them there is no stumbling block.”) God our Father’s requirements are not unrealistic or burdensome. What he teaches us is designed to benefit us. - Isaiah 48:17-18 says: “Thus says the Lord your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord your God that teach you profitable things, that govern you in the way that you walk. O that you had hearkened to my commandments: your peace had been as a river, and your justice as the waves of the sea”.

Point III) - Material Things.

DO MATERIAL PURSUITS DIVIDE YOUR HOME?

Problems and attitudes regarding material things can divide families in many ways. Sadly, some families are disrupted by arguments over money and the desire to be rich-or at least a little richer. Divisions may develop when both mates work secularly and cultivate a "my money, your money" attitude. Even if arguments are avoided, when both mates work they may find themselves with a schedule that leaves little time for each other. A growing trend in the world is for fathers to live away from their families for extended periods - months or even years-in order to earn more money than they could ever earn at home. This can lead to very serious problems.

Review Question. In what ways can problems and attitudes regarding material things divide a family?

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

No rules can be laid down for handling these situations, since different families have to deal with different pressures and needs. Still, Bible counsel can help. For example, Proverbs 13:10, "Among the proud there are always contentions: but they that do all things with counsel, are ruled by wisdom," indicates that needless struggle can sometimes be avoided by "consulting together," "with counsel." This involves not merely stating one's own views but seeking advice and finding out how the other person looks at a matter. Further, working out a realistic budget can help to unify family efforts. Sometimes it is necessary-perhaps temporarily-for both mates to work outside the home to care for added expenses, especially when there are children or other dependents. Try to budget in such a way as to avoid these situations whenever possible. Your greatest vocation is to be a spouse to your mate and a parent to your children. They need YOU far more than they need the things your money can buy. However, when this is the case that both spouses have to work outside the home, the husband can reassure his wife that he still has time for her. He along with the children can lovingly help with some of the work that she might normally handle alone. - Philippians 2:1-4 encourages us: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of charity, if any society of the spirit, if any heart of commiseration: then all of you are to fulfill my joy, that you may be of one mind, having the same charity, being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment. Let nothing be done through contention, neither by vain glory: but in humility, let each esteem others better than themselves: Each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other person's."

Review Question. What are some principles that can help a family under financial pressure?

MAINTAIN PEACE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

However, keep in mind that while money is a necessity in this world we live in, it does not bring happiness. It certainly does not give life. (Meditate on Ecclesiastes 7:12: "Wisdom with riches is more profitable, and brings more advantage to them that see the sun.") Indeed, overemphasis on material things can cause spiritual and moral ruin. (1 Timothy 6:9-12 says: "For they that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils; which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows. But you, O man of God, fly these things: and pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness. Fight the good fight of faith: lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are called, and have confessed a good confession before many witnesses.")

How much better to seek first God's Kingdom and his righteousness, with the assurance of having his blessing on our efforts to obtain life's necessities!

Let us reflect on Our Lord's words "Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat: and the body more than the raiment?"

"Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you by taking thought, can add to his stature by one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, God does so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith?"

"Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knows that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:25-33.

Hebrews 13:5 reminds us: "Let your manners be without covetousness, contented with such things as you have; for He has said: I will not leave you, neither will I forsake you." By keeping spiritual interests to the fore and by pursuing peace first of all with God, you may find that your household, though perhaps divided by certain circumstances, will become one that is truly united in the most important ways.

Review Question. What reminders, if observed, will help a family to work toward unity?

HOW CAN THESE BIBLE PRINCIPLES HELP...

FAMILY MEMBERS TO PRESERVE PEACE IN THE HOME?

Christians cultivate discernment. - Proverbs 16:21; Proverbs 24:3.

A couple's showing love and respect in marriage is not conditional upon their being of the same religion. - Ephesians 5:23-25. "Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church. He is the saviour of his body. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered himself up for it."

A Christian will never deliberately break God's law. - Acts 5:29.

Christians are peacemakers.

- Romans 12:18.

Do not take offense quickly. - Ecclesiastes 7:9-10.
