

How To Secure A Lasting Future For Your Family

A Catholic Guide To Family Happiness

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WHEN God our Father and Creator united Adam and Eve in marriage, Adam expressed his joy by speaking the earliest recorded poetry in the Hebrew Bible. (Genesis 2:22-23 has the story: "And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.") However, the Creator had more in mind than merely bringing pleasure to his human children. He wanted married couples and families to do his will. "And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth." This is what he had told the first pair in his original Blessing. (Genesis 1:28) What a grand, rewarding assignment that was! How happy they and their future children would have been if Adam and Eve had done the Lord God our loving Father's will in full obedience! To Adam, as head of the whole human family God gave a command: Mankind was to follow God's Law: "And he commanded him, saying: Of every tree of paradise you shall eat: But of 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil', you shall not eat." (Genesis 2:16-17.)

Adam failed to keep God's Law and disobeyed. He committed Original Sin. This has led to so much human unhappiness. But, thanks be to God, a savior was promised and a savior has now come! HE is the Way to true human happiness! He is Truth Itself! He is the Life, the Life of God made accessible to us mere mortals.

Review Question... What was God Our Father and Creator's purpose for the family arrangement?

SECURE A LASTING FUTURE FOR YOUR FAMILY.

Today, too, families are happiest when they work together to do God's will, to follow the Law of God, to follow the One who shows and who is the WAY to the Father!. The apostle Paul wrote: "For bodily exercise is profitable to little: but godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8) A family that lives with godly devotion (godliness) and that follows God our Father's guidance as given to us through His Son, Jesus Christ, through the Church which that Son left us as the very Mystical Body of Christ on Earth, through its teachings contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, will indeed find happiness in "the life that now is."

Let us refresh our minds on this manifest love of God for us by reflecting on some words contained in the Holy Bible. Psalm 1:1-3 says: "Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence, [the chair of scoffers.]

But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he shall meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit, in due season. And his leaf shall not fall off: and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.” Psalm 119:105 says [it is Psalm 118: 105 in the Vulgate]: “Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 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 as well, 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). Even if only one member of a family applies these Church and Bible principles, things are better than if no one does.

Over the course of these fourteen booklets on a Catholic Guide to Family Happiness, we have discussed many Church and Bible principles that contribute to family happiness. Likely, you have noticed that some of them appear repeatedly throughout the book. Why? Because they represent powerful truths that work for the good of all in various aspects of family life. A family that strives to apply these Bible and Church principles finds that godly devotion really does ‘have promise of the life that now is.’ Let us look again at four of those important principles.

Review Question. How can families find the greatest happiness today'?

THE VALUE OF SELF-CONTROL.

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

King Solomon said: "As a city that lies open and is not compassed with walls, so is a man that cannot refrain his own spirit in speaking." (Proverbs 25:28.) (Proverbs 29:11 says: “A fool utters all his mind: a wise man defers, and keeps it till afterwards.”) 'Refraining one's own spirit,' exercising self-control, is vital for those who want a happy marriage. Surrendering to destructive emotions, such as rage or immoral lust, will cause damage that takes years to repair-if it can be repaired at all.

Review Question. Why is self-control vital in a marriage?

Of course, no descendant of Adam can fully control his imperfect flesh. (Romans 7:21- 22 says: “I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man: But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind.”) Still, self-control is a fruit of the spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23 lists these fruits in this manner: “But the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity (or kindness), goodness, longanimity (or trustfulness), Mildness, faith, modesty, continency (or self-control), chastity. Against such there is no law.”) Hence, God's spirit will produce self-control in us if we pray for this quality, if we apply the appropriate counsel that is found in the Scriptures, if we pray for the fruits of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation to be applied to our souls, and if we associate with others who manifest it and avoid those who do not.

Psalm 119:100-101 says: (It is Psalm 118:100-101 in the Vulgate.) “I have had understanding above ancients: because I have sought your commandments, O Lord. I have restrained my feet from every evil way: that I may keep your words.” Verse 130 of the same Psalm says: “The declaration of your words gives light: and gives understanding to little ones, O Lord.” Proverbs 13: 20 says: “He that

walks with the wise, shall be wise: a friend of fools shall become like to them.” 1 Peter 4:7 tells us: “But the end of all is at hand. Be prudent therefore, and watch in prayers.”

Such a course will help us to "flee from fornication," even when we are tempted. (1 Corinthians 6:18 says: “Fly fornication. Every sin that a man does, is without the body; but he that commits fornication, sins against his own body.”) We will reject violence and will avoid or conquer alcoholism. And we will deal more calmly with provocations and difficult situations. May all, - including children, - learn to cultivate self-control, this vital fruit of the spirit. – Remember Psalm 119:1-2 (Psalm 118:1-2 in the Vulgate). “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who search his testimonies: that seek him with their whole heart.”

Review Question. How can an imperfect human cultivate self-control, and with what benefits?

A PROPER VIEW OF HEADSHIP.

SECURE A LASTING FUTURE FOR YOUR FAMILY.

The second important principle is recognition of headship. Paul described the proper order of things when he said: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3) This means that a man takes the lead in the family, his wife is loyally supportive, and the children are obedient to their parents. (Ephesians 5:22-25 reinforces this by saying: “Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church. He is the savior 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.” Ephesians 5, in verses 28-33 of the same chapter teach us: ‘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 does 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. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself: and let the wife fear her husband.’ Ephesians 6:1-4 adds further: “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: ‘That it may be well with you, and you may be long lived upon earth’. And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord.”

Notice, though, that headship leads to happiness only when it is handled in a proper way. Husbands who live with godly devotion know that headship is not dictatorship. They imitate Jesus, their Head. Although Jesus was to be "head over all things," he "came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister." (See Ephesians 1: 22, which says: “And he has subjected all things under his feet, and as the ruler of everything, has made him head over all the church.” Matthew 20:28 has the text: “Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many.) In a similar way, a Christian man exercises headship, not to benefit himself, but to care for the interests of his wife and children. - 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 reminds us: “Charity is patient, is kind: charity envies not, deals not perversely; is not puffed up; Is not ambitious, seeks not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinks no evil.”

Review Questions.

(a) What is the divinely established order of headship? (b) What must a man remember if his headship is to bring happiness to his family?

For her part, the wife who lives with godly devotion does not compete with or seek to dominate her husband. She is happy to be supportive of him and to work with him. The Bible sometimes speaks of the wife as being "owned" by her husband, indeed, as he "owns" and "loves" his "own body," leaving no doubt that he is her head. (See, for example the story in Genesis 20:3 "And God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and he said to him: Lo you shall die for the woman you have taken: for she has a husband." Many of the ancient commentators noted that Abimelech was judged guilty both sexually and proprietarily of immorality. Abimelech was forgiven as he could show he had acted in ignorance.)

Through marriage, the wife comes under "the law of her husband." (Romans 7:2 says: "For the woman that has a husband, whilst her husband lives is bound to the law. But if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.") At the same time, the Bible calls her a "helper" and a "complement." (Genesis 2:20) She supplies qualities and abilities that her husband lacks, and she gives him needed support. (Proverbs 31:10-31 is a beautiful canticle of praise for the 'valiant woman', the 'perfect wife'.) The Bible also says that a wife is a "partner," one who works side by side with her mate. (Malachi 2:14 says in part: "The Lord has been witness between you, and the wife of your youth, whom you have now despised: yet she was your partner, and the wife of your covenant.") These Scriptural principles help a husband and a wife to appreciate each other's position and to treat each other with proper respect and dignity.

Review Question. What Scriptural principles will help a wife fulfill her God-ordained role in the family?

"BE SWIFT TO HEAR."

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

Over the course of these fourteen booklets on a Catholic Guide to Family Happiness, the need for communication is frequently highlighted. Why? Because things work better when people talk to and really listen to each other. It was repeatedly emphasized that communication is a two-way street. The disciple James expressed it this way: "You know this, my dearest brethren. Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger." - James 1:19.

It is also important to be careful about how we speak. Rash, contentious, or severely critical words do not constitute successful communication. (Proverbs 15:1 says: 'A mild answer breaks wrath: but a harsh word stirs up fury.' Proverbs 21:9 proclaims: "It is better to sit in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling women, or in a common house. Proverbs 29:11 teaches: "A fool utters all his mind: a wise man defers, and keeps it till afterwards." While verse 20 of the same chapter adds: "Have you seen a man hasty to speak? Folly is rather to be looked for, than his amendment.") Even when what we say is correct, if it is expressed in a cruel, proud, or insensitive manner, it is likely to do more harm than good. Our speech should be tasteful, "seasoned with salt." (Colossians 4:6 says: "Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt: that you may know how you ought to answer every man.") Our words should be like "apples of gold on beds of silver carvings." (Proverbs 25:11) Families that learn to communicate well have taken a major stride toward achieving happiness.

Review Question. Explain some principles that will help all in the family to improve their communication skills.

THE VITAL ROLE OF LOVE.

SECURE A LASTING FUTURE FOR YOUR FAMILY.

The word "love" appears repeatedly through-out the course of these fourteen booklets on a Catholic Guide to Family Happiness. Do you remember the kind of love primarily referred to? It is true that romantic love (Greek, e'ros) plays an important part in marriage, and in successful marriages, deep affection and friendship (Greek, phi-li'a) grow between a husband and a wife. But even more important is the love represented by the Greek word a-ga'pe. This is the love that we cultivate for God Himself. It is the love we cultivate for the Lord God our Loving Father, for Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh, His only begotten Son, for God the Holy Spirit the Advocate, and for our neighbor. (Matthew 22:37-39 tells the story. "Jesus said to him: You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.) It is the love that God our Father expresses toward mankind. (John 3:16 puts it succinctly. "For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son; that whosoever believes in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.") How wonderful that we can show the same kind of love for our marriage mate and children! - 1 John 4:19-20 says: ".Let us therefore love God, because God first has loved us. If any man say, I love God, and hates his brother; he is a liar. For he that loves not his brother, whom he sees, how can he love God, whom he sees not?"

Review Question. What kind of love is vital in marriage?

In marriage, this elevated love is truly "a perfect bond of union." (Colossians 3:14 says: "But above all these things have charity, (love, agape,) which is the bond of perfection.) It binds a couple together and makes them want to do what is best for each other and for their children. When families face difficult situations, love helps them to handle things unitedly. As a couple get older, love helps them to support and continue appreciating each other. "(Love) Charity is patient, is kind: charity envies not, deals not perversely; is not puffed up; Is not ambitious, seeks not her own (interests), is not provoked to anger, thinks no evil; Rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices with the truth; It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (Love) Charity never falls away or fails: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed." - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Review Question. How does love work for the good of a marriage?

The marriage union is especially strong when it is sealed not just by love between marriage mates but primarily by love for God our loving Father Himself. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 offers a practical this-worldly approach to the love of man and woman when it notes: "It is better therefore that two should be together, than one: for they have the advantage of their society: If one fall he shall be supported by the other: woe to him that is alone, for when he falls, he has none to lift him up. And if two lie together, they shall warm one another: how shall one alone be warmed? And if a man prevail against one, two shall withstand him: a threefold cord is not easily broken.") But when human love is supplemented by the sacramental bond of Holy Matrimony and is thus undergirded by love of God Almighty then the marriage can be especially strong. Why? Well, the apostle John wrote: " For this is the charity (love) of God, (it means) that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not heavy." (1 John 5:3) Thus, a couple should train their children in godly

devotion not simply because they love their children deeply, but because this is God our loving Father's command. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7 reminds us: "And these words which I command you this day, shall be in your heart: And you shall tell them to your children, and you shall meditate upon them sitting in your house, and walking on your journey, sleeping and rising.")

They should shun immorality not only because they love each other, but chiefly because they love the loving God, their Creator and Father, who "will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Hebrews 13:4 says: "Let Marriage be honorable in all things, and the bed undefiled. For fornicators and adulterers God will judge.") Even if one partner causes severe problems in a marriage, love for God Almighty, our loving Father will move the other to continue following Bible principles of fidelity, love and all the rest. Happy, indeed, are those families in which love for one another is cemented by love for God Our Father and Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Review Question. Why does love for God on the part of a married couple strengthen their marriage?

A NOTE: - THE GIFT OF SINGLENES.

Not everyone gets married. And not all married couples are able to have children. Many have followed a divine call to embrace the celibate life as religious, as nuns or brothers. Many have been called and are being called to the Catholic Priesthood and its call to minister to God's people as celibates. Many others have been called to embrace the single life 'in the world', as the expression goes.

Jesus was single, and he spoke of singleness (or celibacy) as a gift when it is "for the kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 19:11-12 should be read by all. It says: "Jesus said to them: All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, who were born so from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, who were made so by men: and there are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take this, let him take it." This text is not to be taken in the literal sense; but means, that there are such, who have taken a firm and commendable resolution of leading a single and chaste life, in order to serve God in a more perfect state than those who marry: as St. Paul clearly shows.) The apostle Paul also chose not to get married. He spoke of both the single and the married state as 'gifts.' (1 Corinthians 7:7-8 reads: "For I would that all men were even as myself: but every one has his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that. But I say to the unmarried, and to the widows: It is good for them if they so continue, even as I." Further on, in verses 25-28 he adds: "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful. I think therefore that this is good for the present necessity, that it is good for a man so to be. Are you bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But if you take a wife, you have not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she has not sinned: nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh. But I wish to spare you." Later still, in verses 37-38 he says: "For he that has determined being steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but having power of his own will and has judged this in his heart, to keep his virgin, does well. Therefore, both he that gives his virgin in marriage, does well; and he that gives her not, does better.")

Hence, while throughout the course of these fourteen booklets on a Catholic Guide to Family Happiness we have for the most part discussed matters having to do with marriage and the raising of children, we should not lose sight of the potential blessings and rewards of remaining single or of being married but childless.

THE FAMILY THAT DOES GOD'S WILL.

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

A Christian's whole life is centered on doing the will of God. (Psalm 143:10 says: (It is Psalm 142: 10 in the Vulgate.) "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Your good spirit shall lead me into the right land.") This is what godly devotion really means. Doing God's will helps families to keep their eyes on the truly important things (the truly better things). (Philippians 1:9-10 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,")

For example, Jesus warned: "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." (Not that this was the end or design of the coming of our Savior; 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.) "And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household." (Matthew 10: 35-36) True to Jesus' warning, many of his followers have been persecuted by family members. What a sad, painful situation! Still, family ties should not outweigh our love for the Lord God our Father Almighty and for Jesus Christ. (Matthew 10:37-39 concludes the passage we just examined by offering these challenging, yet consoling words: "He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that takes not up his cross, and follows me, is not worthy of me. He that finds his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it.")

If one endures despite family opposition, the opposers may change when they see the good effects of godly devotion. (1 Corinthians 7:12-16 has this to say from Saint Paul: "For to the rest I speak, not the Lord. If any brother has a wife that believes not, and she consent to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And if any woman has a husband that believes not, and he consent to dwell with her, let her not put away her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife." (The meaning is not, that the faith of the husband or the wife is of itself sufficient to put the unbelieving party, or their children, in the state of grace and salvation; but that it is very often an occasion of their sanctification, by bringing them to the true faith.) "The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband: otherwise, your children should be unclean; but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever depart, let him depart. For a brother or sister is not under servitude in such cases. But God has called us in peace. For how know you, O wife, whether you shall save your husband? Or how know you, O man, whether you shall save your wife?") Saint Peter in 1 Peter 3:1-2 says: "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 of the wives. Considering your chaste conversation with fear.") Even if that does not happen, no lasting good is gained by ceasing to serve God because of opposition.

Review Question. How will a determination to do God's will, help individuals to keep their eyes on the truly important things?

SECURE A LASTING FUTURE FOR YOUR FAMILY.

Doing God's will helps parents to make right decisions. For example, in some communities and cultures, parents tend to view children as an investment, and they count on their children to care for them in their old age. While it is right and proper for grown children to care for their aging parents, such a consideration should not make parents direct their children to a materialistic way of life.

Parents do their children no favor if they bring them up to value material possessions more than spiritual things. - 1 Timothy 6:9 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.”

Review Question. How will a desire to do God's will, help parents act in the best interests of their children?

A fine example in this regard is Eunice, the mother of Paul's young friend Timothy. (2 Timothy 1:5 tells part of Saint Timothy's story. “I call to mind that faith which is in you unfeigned, which also dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and in your mother, Eunice, and I am certain that it is in you also.”) Although Eunice was married to an unbeliever, Eunice, along with Timothy's grandmother Lois, successfully raised Timothy to pursue godly devotion. (2 Timothy 3:14-15 continues with the admonition to the young bishop, Timothy: “But continue you in those things which you have learned, and which have been committed to you: knowing of whom you have learned them; And because from your infancy you have known the holy scriptures, which can instruct you to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus”) When Timothy was old enough, Eunice allowed him to leave home and take up full-time work for the Church. Timothy was to be involved in the preaching work as Paul's missionary companion. (Saint Luke in Acts 16:1-5 tells the story. “And Paul came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, there was a certain disciple there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman that believed; but his father was a Gentile. To this man the brethren that were in Lystra and Iconium, gave a good testimony. Him Paul would have to go along with him: and taking him, he circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in those places. For they all knew that his father was a Gentile. And as they passed through the cities, they delivered unto them the decrees for them to keep, that were decreed by the apostles and ancients who were at Jerusalem. And the churches were confirmed in faith, and increased in number daily.”) How thrilled she must have been when her son became an outstanding missionary! Saint Paul was to appoint him first as a priest, one of the ‘presbyteroi’, and then as a bishop, an ‘episcopoi’. His godly devotion as an adult reflected well on his early training. Surely, Eunice found satisfaction and joy in hearing reports of Timothy's faithful ministry, even though she probably missed having him with her. – In the letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians, 2:19-20 we read of some of Saint Paul's hopes: “And I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy unto you shortly, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know the things concerning you. For I have no man so of the same mind, who with sincere affection is solicitous for you.” What great confidence Saint Paul had in Saint Timothy!

Review Question. How was Timothy's mother, Eunice, an excellent example of a parent who did God's will?

THE FAMILY AND YOUR FUTURE.

FAMILY HAPPINESS.

Jesus was raised in a godly family. He grew up in the Holy Family, as we call it, of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. This family can be a model for all Catholic homes. Jesus offers His own mother to be our spiritual mother as well. In addition, as an adult, Jesus showed a son's proper concern for his mother. (Luke 2:51-52 tells us something of the ‘hidden life of the Holy Family at Nazareth. “And Jesus went down with them, (Mary and Joseph), and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.” John 19:26-27 is where you will be able to meditate on the famous scene

at the foot of the Cross where Our Lord makes provision for the material needs of his mother, whilst simultaneously entrusting the 'disciples he loves' (that's us) into Our Lady's care. "When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he says to his mother: Woman, behold your son. After that, he says to the disciple: Behold your mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own.")

However, Jesus' prime objective was to fulfill God's will, and for him this included opening up the gates of heaven and the way for humans to enjoy everlasting life. This he did when he offered his perfect human life as a ransom for sinful mankind. - Mark 10:45 teaches in Our Lord's own words: "For the Son of man also is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many." In John 5:28-29, Our Lord explains: "Wonder not at this; for the hour comes, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

Review Question. As a son, what proper concern did Jesus show, but what was his prime objective?

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is both true Gods and true man. After Jesus' death, Jesus shows his victory over sin, Satan and death by his glorious resurrection. After forty days, he ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, where he exercises His priestly ministry of intercession on our behalf. Matthew 28:17-20 tells part of the story. "And the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And seeing him, they adored: but some doubted. And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." {By the way, see here the warrant and commission of the apostles and their successors, the bishops and pastors of Christ's church. He received from his Father all power in heaven and in earth: and in virtue of this power, he sends them (even as his Father sent him, St. John 20:21) to teach and disciple, not one, but all nations; and instruct them in all truths. That he may assist them effectually in the execution of this commission, he promises to be with them, not for three or four hundred years only, but all days, even to the consummation of the world. How then could the Catholic Church ever go astray; having always with her pastors, as is here promised, Christ himself, who is the way, the truth, and the life as St. John's gospel in chapter 14 explains.} Saint Paul, in Romans 14:9 comments: "For to this end Christ died and rose again; that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."

Christ's victory is seen in the great vision of Saint John in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 11:15, John records: "And the seventh angel sounded the trumpet: and there were great voices in heaven, saying: The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen."

So we see that God our loving Father raised Jesus into heavenly life and gave him great authority, installing him as King in the heavenly Kingdom where He sits at the Father's right hand. From thence, He shall come in glory to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom will have no end. Jesus' sacrifice made it possible for us humans to be united with him in that Kingdom. We now look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Saint John, in his glorious and mystical vision, saw this fulfilled in prophetic and apocalyptic language. In Revelation 5:9-10 he saw the saints in heaven. "And they sung a new canticle, saying:

You are worthy, O Lord, (the slain Lamb of God, Christ Our Lord,) to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because you were slain, and have redeemed us to God, in your blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. And have made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.”

Later, in his vision, he sees the symbolic number of those saved, one perfect number, twelve times twelve times one thousand, to represent all the redeemed. Revelation 14:1 reads: “And I beheld, and lo a lamb stood upon mount Zion, and with him a hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads.” In verse 4, he sees in greater detail that these are the representatives of all the male virgin saints. “These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb.” Later, in Saint John’s vision, in Revelation 21: 3-5, we read: “And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people; and God himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new. And he said to me: Write, for these words are most faithful and true.” Yes. When Christ shall come again, there will be a ‘new’ heavens and a ‘new’ earth. No more tears, no death, no mourning, no crying, no sorrow. Something to look forward with great joy!

Next in Revelation 22:1-4, Saint John tells us that Heaven will be the Messianic Jerusalem, (the Heavenly Jerusalem,) using all the prophetic images of Messianic fulfillment taken from the Old Testament, the river of life, the tree of life, The medicinal leaves and the ability to now see God ‘face to face’. “And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no curse any more; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face: and his name shall be on their foreheads.”

What a future has been made possible by the coming of Christ! What a victory has been won for us by the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord! One of the greatest privileges we have today is to tell this glorious good news to our neighbors. – In Matthew 24:14 Our Lord reminds us: “And this gospel of the kingdom, shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come.”

Review Question. What glorious prospects did Jesus' faithful course open up for those who do God's will?

SECURE A LASTING FUTURE FOR YOUR FAMILY.

As the apostle Paul showed, living a life of godly devotion holds the promise that people can inherit those blessings in the life "which is to come." Surely, this is the very best way to find happiness! Remember, "the world passes away, and the concupiscence (and desires) thereof: but he that does the will of God, abides for ever." (1 John 2:17) Hence, whether you are a child or a parent, a husband or a wife, or a single adult, with or without children, strive to do God's will. Even when you are under pressure or are faced with extreme difficulties, never forget that you are a servant of the living God. Thus, may your actions bring joy to God our loving Father. (Proverbs 27:11 says:

“Study wisdom, my son, and make my heart joyful, that you may give an answer to him that reproaches.”) And may your conduct result in happiness for you now and everlasting life in the new world to come!

Review Question. What reminder and what encouragement are given both to families and to individuals?

HOW CAN THESE BIBLE PRINCIPLES HELP...

YOUR FAMILY TO BE HAPPY?

Self-control can be cultivated.

- Galatians 5:22-23.

With a proper view of headship, both husband and wife seek the family's best interests.

- Ephesians 5:22-25, Ephesians 5:28-33;

Ephesians 6:4.

“And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord.”

Communication includes listening. - James 1:19.

Love for God our Father will cement a marriage.

- 1 John 5:3.

Doing God's will is the most important goal for a family. - Psalm 143:10 (Psalm 142:10 in the Vulgate); 1 Timothy 4:8.
