

Lesson 13: A Family Life Blueprint

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

--John 13:34-35

How can we live together as God’s family members? The Father didn’t just create us, tell us to live as a family, and then sit back to see what would happen. He insured that we would know how to live in fellowship with one another. He gave us:

* Jesus Christ, our perfect Example. He left heaven to enter the world. As a man, He lived before us the way God wants us to live. He modeled good human relations.

* The Bible, our perfect instruction manual. It is filled with directions for living in the Father’s family. As Jesus said, “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

* An Instructor. In John 16:13, Jesus told us we have the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. An important part of this truth is how to live with one another.

Following are a brief description of some of the Father’s directions for family living.

Love One Another

Even those who know little about the Bible have heard the phrase from 1 John 4:8, “God is love.” The Bible constantly emphasizes the importance of loving each other. It tells us love fulfills God’s law, covers a multitude of sins, and that faith does its work through love. 1 Corinthians 16:14 exhorts us to do all we do we through love.

Live in Harmony

Functional family life depends on unity and harmony. Bickering and quarreling rob a home of peace and joy. They also undermine its strength to withstand challenges and outside attacks.

Knowing this, Jesus asked the Father to make His children one (John 17:20-21). In Galatians 5:15, Paul admonished believers not to bite and devour one another.

Be Humble & Forgiving

Most people don't like the idea of humility. That comes from the rebellious nature we inherited from Adam and his refusal to humble himself before his Creator. This doesn't mean we should embrace a low self-image. The Father wants us to be humble in the sense of giving ourselves to Him and others. Likewise, humility leads us to forgive people who hurt us. A humble spirit recognizes that in our lifetime we have hurt and injured others, too.

Encourage Each Other

As the Father's children, we face attacks from our enemy, the devil. Satan constantly tries to intimidate and discourage us. But through His Word and other ways, the Father counters with His encouragement. But He also urges His children to encourage one another. A Christian performs a valuable service by lifting up brothers and sisters when they are feeling down.

Care for Each Other

I'll never forget the scene I witnessed in Mozambique. Our ministry had set up a feeding line for children threatened by starvation. From among a multitude of starving faces, I noticed a little boy. Though so weak he could hardly walk, he half-carried and half-dragged another child. After receiving his soup, he used a dried leaf as a spoon to feed the younger boy--his brother. Our Father wants us to show this kind of concern for His family.

Be Unselfish

More than once on my television show I have asked people who do some form of marriage counseling what causes most relationship problems. The answer: "Selfishness." But neither the Father nor His Son are selfish. The Father gave His only Son to die on the cross (John 3:16) that we might come to know Him. Jesus was so unselfish He willingly died for us (Ephesians 5:2 and 5:25).

Rejoice in Your Destiny

With God as your Father and other born-again believers in Christ as your brothers and sisters, you have a wonderful destiny. You part of God's plan to save and bless all people, in

every nation. You will find your greatest blessing from joining hands and hearts with your family to bless others.

Deeper Study

1. Look up the following verses: John 15:12, Matthew 5:43-45, Romans 13:8, Hebrews 10:24, and 1 Peter 4:8. What is the key instruction in these Scriptures? How does this apply to other races, cultures, and those who have hurt you?

2. Read Acts 2:46-47, Acts 4:24-31, and Acts 5:12. List at least three supernatural events that occurred when Christians were of one mind. Then describe what could happen if we were in unity today.

3. Look up Romans 12:3, Galatians 6:3, Ephesians 4:2, and Colossians 3:12. What truths do they contain about being humble? How will this change your attitude toward humility?

4. What relationship is there between humility and forgiveness? If you find it hard to forgive, read John 20:20-23 and explain why you have this power.

5. Look at Romans 1:12, Colossians 1:21-22, Hebrews 3:13, and Hebrews 10:25. What thoughts do you find about encouragement? What can you do to encourage others touched by failures, disappointments, or setbacks?

6. After reading these verses, list actions you can take to implement their truths about caring.

Acts 4:33-35 _____

1 Corinthians 12:25 _____

Galatians 5:13 _____

Ephesians 4:29 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15 _____

8. Read Isaiah 61:1-9. What three points excite you the most in relation to God's call on your life? Why?
