



Making Families Whole

1995 Family Ministries Planbook

by Karen and Ron Flowers

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Including resources for
Christian Home and Marriage Week—February 11-18
Family Togetherness Week—September 16-23

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Preface

In this annual issue of the Family Ministries Planbook we consider the theme *Making Families Whole*. This topic allows an exploration of the holistic aspects of family health and well-being, so the various segments found within this resource cover aspects of physical, emotional, and mental health in families—all under the umbrella of that spiritual soundness which family ministries seeks to promote and encourage.

What is wholeness? What is health? What are the traits of a healthy family? A number of recent authors have looked at the matter of family wellness, and reports of this work and research are included in *Making Families Whole*. The definitions of wellness for families that have emerged involve such aspects as having meaningful communication, taking time for one another, handling anger effectively, managing and making creative use of conflict, achieving satisfying levels of intimacy, facing honestly relational shortcomings, seeking regular support and care to enrich relationships, and actively addressing areas of intrapersonal and interpersonal dysfunction with the help of trained individuals. Despite such emerging definitions of family wellness, and despite the fact that we have learned to adjust our expectations about good physical health to accommodate the limitations of our age and bodily fitness, whenever spiritual health is addressed there is frequently the expectation that lofty ideals must be realized. Spiritual health and wholeness, it is often assumed, are not really health and wholeness unless there is the achievement of an unblemished perfection.

Christian families often founder in the midst of such expectations about wholeness. Somehow we must at once hold high the divine ideals for families yet realize that humanity, broken and faulty, cannot fully reach them. We live as Christians both with the upward call of God and the reality of human limitations and fallenness. Only in Christ can individuals and families attain to that wholeness, that "godlikeness" which is "higher than the highest human thought can reach" (*Education*, p.18). In our ministry for families we are learning that, through His redemptive plan, God has introduced a new definition for wholeness, for spiritual health. Spiritual health, which sets the scene for optimum mental, emotional, and physical health, is the active presence of God's Spirit working with our spirit. Wholeness for humans cannot be at this time a static state, but an ongoing process whereby God's healing force is continuously at work within our broken bodies, minds, and spirits.

In *A World Waiting to Be Born* author M. Scott Peck (1993) captures this idea when he writes, The condition of health is not a static state of perfect wellness; it is, among other things, a condition of ongoing healing. . . . A healthy organization—whether a marriage, a family, or a business corporation—is not one with an absence of problems, but one that is actively and effectively addressing or healing its problems. (p. 10)

A number of contributors have joined us in looking at the facets of what it means to make families whole in this way, to link families with the redemptive, healing truths of the gospel. To them we offer our thanks. And for the rapidly expanding number of family ministries leaders around the world who are investing themselves in the noble task of uplifting families we pray God's blessing.

Karen and Ron Flowers
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
October, 1994.

Preventive Health Care For Marriages

by Paull and Becky Dixon

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Theme

God has given simple preventive principles that can help couples to maintain a healthy marriage.

Theme Text

3 John 2

Presentation Notes

Throughout the following outline, superscripts such as ^{1,2,3} are used to indicate items from the section called **Sermon Illumination** which may be used for illustration. The addition of your personal illustrations will enhance the presentation.

Introduction

The theme for Family Ministries throughout the world this year is *Making Families Whole*. Wholeness denotes well being or health. God wants us to enjoy health of mind, body, and spirit, including healthy relationships. Unless physical health is carefully guarded and maintained, disease may be the result. A healthy marriage must likewise be guarded and maintained. As with our bodies and our minds, our marriages require a plan for resisting “diseases” that might impair the relationship.

Marriage must be protected. Millions of germs inhabit our environment. One scientist estimates there are 500 million organisms in just a teaspoon of garden soil, and that a half teaspoon of saliva harbors one billion microorganisms (Folkenberg & McAdams, 1992, p. 39). While some of these germs and bacteria are harmful, most are harmless. So, for example, when the minister says to the groom at the wedding, according to Western custom, “You may now kiss the bride,” the couple is sharing far more than love. They are exchanging vast armies of living organisms!

We live in an environment that is hostile to us physically, spiritually, and relationally. The virus of sin, with thousands of varieties, and the bacteria of selfishness, equally diverse and ubiquitous, are in the very air we breathe. Marriage, the closest family relationship, is the most vulnerable to relational germs, disease, and death. A carefully crafted strategy is employed with the utmost efficiency by Satan himself to inject into every marriage some kind of killer disease. Why? Because he knows that a truly Christian marriage, with its ever expanding influence, has the potential to spread happiness all over the earth, resulting in a chorus of praise and worship to our Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Satan also relentlessly attacks marriages because he understands clearly that God’s ideal for the “one flesh” relationship between a man and a woman is the most perfect human demonstration of Christ’s relationship to His people. The Bible says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25).

With many marriages inside the church as sick and vulnerable as those outside the church, the question is frequently asked, “Isn’t there something we can do to protect our marriages?” The answer is “Yes!” God has

provided ample instruction for developing sound interpersonal relationships, just as He has taught us to maintain our physical well being, and the good news is that He has promised us His grace to follow those instructions.

Preventive health care for marriage. God's preventive health care plan for marriage is simple, inexpensive, and available to all. His divinely-given principles, like the laws of physical health, will provide a protective shield from the relational diseases afflicting marriages in the 90s. These principles will benefit not only married couples, but every Christian who has become a part of the Church. For, through the promises of the everlasting covenant, the Church has become the bride of Christ. As believers, we are all married to Christ.

We would like to describe eight principles in God's preventive health care plan for marriages.^{1,2}

Planning for Time Together Is Important

Many married couples are so exhausted at the end of the day that they have no time for each other. Weeks and even months may go by without any deep, intimate sharing or time alone.

If you do not fill in your calendar, someone else will. Make it a priority to write in appointments with your spouse.³ You have to schedule time for one another as carefully as you schedule work, classes, and church activities. This is such an important concept that even God has written us into His calendar. That is why He gave the Sabbath as a special time for us to be with Him.

An important aspect of your planning together also includes setting goals for your marriage. Consider the needs that you have as individuals or as a couple. These may be tangible needs such as further education, paying off debts, saving for a home, or they may be intangible needs such as more personal leisure time, more couple time, or developing better communication skills (Flowers, 1988, p. BE 75). Which needs do you think are the most important for you? How might you and your spouse work together to set goals to meet these needs?

Affirmation and Humor Are Needed Daily

Husbands and wives have an incredible power to build up or to destroy one another. If they are not careful, spouses can lose sight of those special qualities that first drew them together. When this happens they begin to focus on the negatives.

Everyone needs affirmation. The Bible says, "How delightful is a timely word" (Proverbs 15:23, NASB). Charlie Shedd suggests that everyday spouses should share at least one thing they appreciate about each other, and weekly they should affirm a quality never mentioned before. Someone once said, "Try praising your wife, even if at first it frightens her."

Humor, laughter, and pleasant times will also enhance a relationship, but this is often overlooked in the busyness and challenges of family life. The Bible says, "A cheerful heart is good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). Life is serious business, but a couple who can laugh together will find joy in the midst of their struggles. One fitness expert claims that healthy people laugh several hundred times a day (Johnson, 1990, p. 72).⁴

One medical doctor calls laughter, "internal jogging," and believes that it has a beneficial effect on most of the major systems of the body. A bumper sticker expresses the same thought in a different way: "ONE LAUGH = 3 TABLESPOONS OF OAT BRAN" (Johnson, 1990, p. 72). "Jogging on the inside" in response to some natural humor not only eases the pain and suffering of life, but is really an indication of hope.

We can laugh because we know Someone is in control and that Someone loves us and is working all things together for good (see Romans 8:28). The Book of Job says, “He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy” (Job 8:21).⁵

Religion Is Foundational to Healthy Marriages

While a personal relationship with God is very important, one of the special privileges that married couples have is to pray and study God’s Word together. As day by day they kneel seeking God’s presence in their family, their hearts are bonded more closely together. Prayers for guidance in some major decision, prayers for a sick child, prayers for pressing financial needs, prayers for victory over some sin, prayers for each other, prayers of praise—these can be the sweetest, most intimate times for husband and wife. Our God is faithful. He answers those prayers. Scripture indicates, “If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).

Studying the Word together enables a couple to discover those passages that speak of developing closer, deeper relationships with one another. A Christian author describes it thus: “The Creator who began with nothingness and made beautiful mountains and streams and clouds and cuddly little babies has elected to give us the inside story of the family. . . . Everything from handling money to sexual attitudes is discussed in scripture with each prescription bearing the personal endorsement of the King of the Universe” (Dobson, 1987, p. 54). The Bible assures us, “The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him” (Lamentations 3:25).

Talking Is the Life Blood of a Marriage

A professor in one of our colleges used to say frequently to his students, “If there is a God of love, He will reveal Himself.” The Bible states, “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:8). God must reveal Himself for us to know and love Him. The same concept is operative in marriage. Husbands and wives must reveal themselves to each other in order to be truly known and loved. The complaint most commonly verbalized by wives concerning their husbands is, “I really do not know this man because he does not talk to me.”

Why do men and women have such trouble communicating? One reason is because they are different. When these differences are not understood and appreciated the relationship quickly loses its “spark” and the early attraction begins to wane. Too often one or both spouses try to change their partner to be like themselves, or they suppress their feelings and just do not talk about their concerns. Both strategies hurt and can eventually destroy the relationship (see Gray, 1992, p. 49).⁶

Two factors largely influence couple communication. One is attitude and the other is the art of listening. One author has wisely stated, “Let all seek to discover the excellencies rather than the defects. Often it is our own attitude, the atmosphere that surrounds ourselves, which determines what will be revealed to us in another” (White, 1952, p. 105).

Listening is a matter of the heart. It is said, “There is music in all hearts. If we listen we can hear each other’s song.” Too often we do not really listen with the heart. We can do that for our spouses by looking at them when they speak, trying to understand not only the content of what they saying, but the feelings behind their words as well. After they have shared their feelings, we can then reflect back to them what we think they have said, and the feelings we heard them express.⁷

Listening from the heart is one of the most respectful and affirming things we can do for one another. This listening with love will heal hurts, banish resentments, and resolve anger, as well as enhance intimacy.

Nutrition and Other Health Habits Affect the Quality of a Marriage

Caring for the mind and body is as important as observing the laws of spiritual health (see White, 1946, p. 17). Tiredness, low energy, irritability, illness, depression, stress, moodiness—any one of these has the capability of destroying a relationship. How many divorces, affairs, or conflicts might be traced to a spouse who is too tired, too irritable, too self-absorbed to cultivate a meaningful relationship?

The answer to many marital problems may be as simple as a change in lifestyle habits: a diet low in sugar and fat, regular exercise, sufficient sleep, time spent outside in the fresh air and sunshine. Good health habits benefit us personally, and greatly enhance our relationship with God and our spouse.

Marriage May Be an Example of Christ's Ministry

Husbands and wives may provide a practical example of God's love to other couples and individuals who might need their help and influence.⁸ The evangelistic potential of a married couple is enormous. Ellen White says, "Marriage does not lessen their usefulness, but strengthens it. They may make their married life a ministry to win souls to Christ . . ." (White, 1952, p. 102).

As husband and wife minister together to others, opening their home in hospitality and opening their hearts to share their experience, the marriage itself will be refreshed and strengthened.

Responsibilities Must Be Shared and Roles Must Be Flexible

Many married women are completely overwhelmed with work. Studies show that when a woman starts working full time outside of the home, her husband takes on only an additional eighteen minutes of work around the house each week. Often she still maintains the major responsibility for the house and the children in addition to her full time job.⁹

There are times, of course, when it is the husband who is overloaded. In this case, the husband will want to evaluate his work to determine what has caused the overload and what parts of the load might be shed. His wife might be able to take over some of the responsibilities that are essential. Some marriage partners have found it helpful to negotiate a work contract. This provides an opportunity to talk about what must be done and how the responsibilities can be divided.¹⁰

Flexibility, wisdom, and genuine love are needed to meet the increasing challenges of living in the 90s, and for the survival of any marriage. The Bible admonishes us "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Saving and Realistic Budgeting Are Essential to Marital Harmony

A survey conducted by Christian Financial Concepts revealed that in a large sampling of Christian families, 40 percent spent more money than they made. The study also showed that almost half of the families surveyed spent approximately \$2,000 per year on consumer interest. The pressures of overspending can lead to instability in the home. Ninety percent of those who divorce cite serious financial problems as the major contributing factor in the breakdown of the marriage (see Reid, 1993, p. 61).

The Bible makes it clear that debt is slavery. "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7). "Many, very many, have not so educated themselves that they can keep their expenditures within the limit of their income. . . . They borrow and borrow again and again and become overwhelmed in debt, and consequently they become discouraged and disheartened" (White, 1952, p. 374).

Without a sane and sensible budget, the chances of incurring debt are nearly overwhelming. Once the budget is established by husband and wife, it directs how the family money will be spent. Decisions about purchases outside of the budget should be discussed, studied, and agreed upon before any action is taken.¹¹

Materialism is one sign of the end-time. Married couples need to keep in mind the effect of every financial decision upon their own relationship and their freedom to serve Christ. The counsel of the Apostle Paul is especially relevant to our day, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another” (Romans 13:8).

Conclusion

To be *partners*, this is God's preventive health-care plan for marriages. Every married couple must value these principles and intentionally make them a part of their daily life. The diseases attacking marriages are more resistant and deadly than at any other time in history. A failed marriage has devastating and far reaching consequences not only for the family but for the church and for society. There can be no delay. Now is the time to act. A failure to follow these principles will certainly open the way for disease in any marriage. To follow the "partners" plan with God's help will cause true love for your spouse and family to grow and strengthen. What in life can really compare with that?

Sermon Illumination

1. We believe these principles are universal. As we have stated them, they may be illustrated for English-speaking congregations by the letters in the English word *partners*. Since spouses are partners in marriage, we use these eight letters as an acronym to describe eight principles in God's preventive health-care plan for marriages. It is suggested that the speaker use large, bold, individual letters for each letter in the acronym PARTNERS. These are displayed one-by-one as the different principles are presented, so that at the end of the sermon the word PARTNERS is spelled out completely. Where the sermon is translated into other languages, speakers may wish to alter the subject matter to produce a suitable acrostic.

- P** - Plan
- A** - Affirmation
- R** - Religion
- T** - Talking
- N** - Nutrition
- E** - Example
- R** - Responsibilities
- S** - Save

2. Suggested visual aids for each of the principles:

- Planning for time: Calendar or appointment book
- Affirmation and humor: Book or magazine collection of wholesome humor
- Religion: Bible
- Talking: Telephone
- Nutrition: Bowl of fruit

- Example: Dinner plate to represent hospitality
- Responsibilities: Dish towel
- Save: Calculator, savings bank book, coins or bills

3. An accountant who owned his own business worked long hours and some evenings to meet appointments with his corporate clients. Realizing that this often crowded out the time he could spend with his wife, the accountant made a commitment to reserve Wednesday nights for a date night with her. Whenever he was asked to attend a business meeting on Wednesday night he would reply, "I'm sorry but I have a previous appointment which I cannot change." He kept that date night every week for more than seven years until he transferred to a less demanding job. His wife was pleased and the relationship flourished because of the attention and thoughtfulness that was shown.

4. Persons with different temperaments may view the same situation differently. When their automobile broke down and had to be towed for a hundred miles at a cost of \$1 per mile, a husband, somewhat melancholy by temperament, was gloomy and irritable. His wife, however, saw at least one positive benefit and tried to convey that to him, "Think of all the fuel we are saving!"

5. Barbara Johnson, writer and humorist, experienced unbelievable losses over a span of nine years. Her husband was seriously injured in an automobile accident. One son was killed in Vietnam. Another son, returning from a vacation in Alaska, was killed by a drunk driver. A third son, after graduating from a Christian school with honors and much acclaim, confessed that he was bisexual. This mother, whose grief seemed limitless, found healing in Christ and in the gradual return of the ability to laugh. She says, "A good cry is a wet-wash, but a hearty laugh gives you a dry cleaning. . . . If you can learn to laugh in spite of the circumstances that surround you, you will enrich others, enrich yourself and, more than that, you will LAST!" (Johnson, 1990, p. 71.)

6. A wife and husband sought the help of a counselor because they sensed that their marriage was in such serious trouble it would likely soon end in divorce. In the counselor's office the wife began sharing her concerns, "We are strangers in the same house. He brings home a paycheck, keeps the cars clean, and helps occasionally with the children, but I have no idea what is going on inside his head." She went on to clearly articulate her frustrations, and ended with the warning, "If something doesn't change, I'm getting out."

This woman felt lonely, isolated, and unappreciated. When her husband shared his perspective on the marriage, it became clear that even though he desired to understand his wife, he was on a totally different wave length. To all of her deeply expressed feelings of frustration, loneliness, and pain he gave only logic-oriented, left-brain responses which left her feeling totally misunderstood.

7. Mary says to Bill, "I'm so exhausted after keeping up with the children all day, I'd really like for just the two of us to go someplace by ourselves tonight."

Listen to Bill's reply. "Mary, you think you're tired. I wish I could stay home just one day and play with the kids and watch TV."

Hearing this, Mary feels misunderstood and devalued.

Listen again as Bill tunes in to Mary's words and feelings, "Mary, you sound pretty exhausted after keeping up with the children all day. I agree, I think a night off for just the two of us might be just the pick-up you need."

How do you think Mary feels about this kind of response?

8. A mother and father were concerned about their daughter who was attending college 3,000 miles from home. They were greatly relieved when she shared with them how three Christian couples ministered to her in countless ways. Here is what she told them:

"Gene spent several days helping me find a used car to buy. Janet, his wife, frequently invites me for meals."

"David and Lisa bring me food and include me in many of their family outings to the beach and the mountains."

"John and Judy take me with them to various church functions, call to check on me, and make me feel welcome anytime."

The loving ministry of these couples held this young woman steady during a vulnerable transition period in her life. Every married couple can make their marriage an example of Christ's ministry.

9. Once, while contemplating his high calling, a minister asked his wife, "What can I do to be a better pastor?" Without a moment's hesitation she replied, "Help your wife more around the house!" At first the pastor thought she was joking, but then realized she was very serious.

Commenting on the incident he said, "I can and should bring my wife flowers, give her a card, take her out to dinner occasionally, but that which really speaks to her heart is when I wash the dishes, vacuum the house, or clean her car. My wife does an incredible amount of work at home as well as in her job, and what is really meaningful to her is receiving some practical help."

10. One young couple had been married for only five weeks when they found themselves already talking divorce! The wife made a list of twenty-one household responsibilities that needed to be done every week. To her chagrin she found that she was doing eighteen of them, two of them were shared, and her husband was doing only one of them. With the help of a counselor they were able to renegotiate their role expectations, and save their marriage (see Van Pelt, 1985, p. 32).

11. A young wife's mother gave her money for the down payment on a car. Since the money was given to *her*, the wife decided she would make the decision on what kind of car to buy. Without consulting her husband, she went to a dealership and bought a brand new vehicle. After the down payment, the financial arrangements still required five years of monthly payments. Needless to say, the husband was not happy about his wife's unilateral decision. There were several implications for the family. The car seats were very uncomfortable for his large size, but, more than this, the monthly payments meant that the wife had to leave their children with a babysitter and find a job outside of the home.

This illustrates the importance of communication between husband and wife. Serious consideration given to her needs and wishes, and consultation together might have led to some alternative solutions that would have created less tension between them and led to a more satisfactory situation for the family.

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Building Characters for Eternity

by Linda Koh

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Theme

Scripture reveals the paramount task of parents—to develop solid characters in their children, characters that will stand firm against negative influences of the world.

Theme Texts

Deut. 6:1, 2, 5-7

Proverbs 22:6

Presentation Notes

Throughout the following outline, superscripts such as ^{1,2,3} are used to indicate items from the section called **Sermon Illumination** which may be used for illustration. The addition of your personal illustrations will enhance the presentation.

Introduction

In a world of change, diminishing family values, moral laxity, and increased numbers of single parents, our children's spiritual condition is at stake. It is therefore crucial for parents to devote their time and energy to building a foundation for their child's character. It is critical because a child's spiritual character will be molded no matter what. It will either be molded by Christian parents or it will be molded by the world. Character development *cannot* be left to chance.

Moral theorists like Robert Peck, Robert Havighurst, and Lawrence Kohlberg¹ tell us that childhood is the *critical* period for a person's character to be formed and shaped. In fact, during the first seven years the foundation of a child's character is pretty much established (see Kuzma, 1989, p. 3).

Develop a Plan for Character Building

Skillful artists and builders work with clear plans before them. A sculptor with no design makes every cut haphazardly. A builder without a blueprint constructs a house that is weak and unattractive. In the same way, parents must have a design, a plan for what they want their child's character to be. What do you want to build into his or her life? Consider the words of Jesus, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?" (Luke 14:28).

Christian parents need to establish specific goals for their parenting. Visualize your child as God does, at the height of maturity. Do you see him or her as walking with God, sharing time and possessions with others, ministering to those in need, being self-sacrificing, or serving God in the mission field? With such mental pictures in mind of what they would like for their children, parents can keep on target and focus on ideas for parenting that will increase the likelihood that their children will accept their values and, as they mature, will espouse and aspire to goals similar to those of their parents.²

Teach by Precept

The duty of parents is clearly explained in Deut. 6:1, 2, 5-7. These texts record a time when God told His people to teach their children the faithfulness of God and to promote the fear of God in their homes.

Parental instruction must be diligent and earnest. "These commandments that I give you . . . impress them on your children." This requires making the most of opportunities and activities in which the child is interested to teach him or her important values and beliefs such as love, respect, honesty, and kindness.

Parents also need to teach continuously and with perseverance. "Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Formation of habits and the training of character are not attained by isolated efforts, but by regular and unceasing repetition.³ If playing in the garden or reading a story together provides parents the "impressionable" moment to guide and to teach, then do so by all means. We should not let opportunities slip by because we are too tired at the end of the day, or because the children are busy with their play, or because everyone is watching television.

Samuel was one of the finest examples of spiritual faithfulness in the Old Testament. He remained obedient to God throughout his life. He grew up in Eli's household at a time when Eli was also the high priest. He had watched Eli lose his sons to the world. He had seen what Eli had done wrong and the mistakes he should have avoided. Unfortunately, Samuel failed just as Eli did—he lost his sons in exactly the same way (see 1 Samuel 8:3).

Being a great leader does not guarantee effectiveness as a parent. The training of children takes time. Eli and Samuel were too busy serving the Lord to take time to train their sons or to build close, influential relationships with them. They failed to obey the command to teach their sons when "you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6:7).

Teach by Example

There is an old saying, "Action speaks louder than words." If training is to be effective, it must start within the parents. Parents must themselves exemplify the values and beliefs they hold so fervently. Children will have greater respect for instruction if they witness a genuineness in the models of their mothers and fathers.

In Philippians 4:9, Paul illustrates this point vividly, "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." The Philippian Christians had an excellent example in Paul who was a pattern of the same truth he preached. No wonder the church at Philippi was so healthy and happy.

All this speaks volumes to parents. If you want your children to be kind, you must first show kindness, if you want them to love God and revere His Sabbath, you must show them how you love the Lord and keep His Holy Day.

Discover the Child's Bent of Personality

In Proverbs 6:22 we find the old familiar verse most Christians can quote from memory, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Training and developing children's characters require that parents recognize the importance of individual differences in their children. Training your children does not mean bringing them up as you see them. Rather it is training them in the way they should go—that is, in keeping with individual gifts or bent.

In every child God places in our arms, there is a *bent*, a set of established inclinations or personality traits. It is vital in character training to discover that *bent* and adapt our training accordingly. It is unwise for parents to fit every child into their (the parents') mold. Parents need to be wise and sensitive to know the way

God made their children to be, so that they can cultivate and bring forth the best in them. But how do parents detect which bents our children have?

Proverbs 20:11-12 is still the best answer, "Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right. Ears that hear and eyes that see—the Lord has made them both." Parents will discover the characteristics of their child when they study him or her carefully, using the "ears that hear and eyes that see." Observe, listen, and spend time with your child to discover his or her interests, inclinations, strengths and weaknesses. Help the child become what God has intended for him or her to be.

Teach Your Child to Think

While it is important to teach by example and by precept, it is even more important to teach your child to think for himself or herself. In character building, children should be encouraged to think through moral and religious values clearly, so that they can clarify their own values and see the consequences of their actions.

In his book, *Help Your Child Learn Right From Wrong*, Sidney Simon suggests that parents take time to help their children discuss values, actively choosing their beliefs and behaviors, prizing them, cherishing them, and acting consistently on their beliefs (see Hollander, 1980).

In many Christian homes a child is told what he or she may or may not do, but is not trained to understand why. Internally, that child lacks a conviction to stand firm on what he or she believes to be right. It is therefore important to encourage your child to think about why an act is right or wrong. One way to do this is to pose various dilemmas and ask your child what he or she would do and why. For example, you might ask, "What would you do if your family didn't have enough food and the neighbors had plenty, but wouldn't give you any?" Help your child think about and find justification for his or her reactions.

Allow Your Child to Learn From the Consequences of a Decision

Parents, try not to shield your children from the consequences of their decisions. If they decide to act on certain issues after considering your advice, allow them to make that choice. When they make a wrong choice, they may have to pay for it. But it can be a valuable lesson from experience.

If parents decide everything for the child, he or she has no need to develop self-control, or to consider what is right or wrong. When such children are really confronted with many tempting situations they will have no previous experiences that have sharpened their insight or helped them have confidence that they are making good choices.^{4,5}

Provide Children With Real Responsibilities

It is important that our children develop responsibility if they are to act morally as well as reason morally. But to develop responsibility, children have to *have* responsibility. That includes taking care of their possessions, doing their homework, keeping their commitments, and earning their pocket money when they are old enough to do so.

However, we also need to provide them with opportunities to care for others, to contribute to the welfare of other family members and those in the church and community. Such responsibilities might be supervising and reading to a younger brother or sister, caring for a pet, sharing household chores, helping a charitable organization (such as walking in a "walkathon" fund-raiser for the handicapped), or putting aside some pocket money for a worthy cause. At an early age children can be taught principles of Christian stewardship, the wise management of all that God has provided for them, including the returning to Him of their tithe and giving offerings for His cause.

Responsibility training should start early. Even two-year-olds can help mother fold dishtowels! As children's moral reasoning develops, parents should seek every opportunity to explain why we should help others. This helps children to grow up in a balanced way, with thoughtfulness and concern for others, instead of always demanding their rights and having no sense of their obligations.

Conclusion

Training children to have upright characters, to love God, to be loyal citizens now and in the future, and to have altruistic concerns for the welfare of others requires a life of self-sacrifice on the part of parents. It requires love that "seeketh not its own" but lives and gives of itself. It requires not so much the material things that parents can provide for their children. Rather, it requires that parents labor consistently with love and patience to teach their children by their actions and lifestyles the moral values and character traits they so desire to transmit.

Sermon Illumination

1. Stages of children's moral development

Lawrence Kohlberg's research on the moral development of children indicates that there is a developmental pattern that influences a child to make decisions regarding right and wrong.

- **Infancy stage (0-2).** Before age two the child has little understanding of right and wrong. He or she tends to follow impulses. However, parents and adults condition him or her to respond to the word "No" as a guide to things that are wrong.
- **Preschool stage (2-5).** At this stage a child makes decisions based on whether he or she will be *rewarded* or *punished* for a behavior. These children are generally self-centered, doing what they want to do. If caught or punished for a wrong behavior, they will refrain from doing it.
- **Early elementary school stage (6-12).** This is the stage when the child is a conformist and does what is acceptable and right because it is the acceptable thing to do. Kohlberg calls this the "Good-boy, Good-girl stage." Children abide by the rules because their parents are proud of them or they would be ashamed if others saw them not doing so. So they do what's right in order to be "good."
- **Later elementary school stage (12-14).** The child keeps a strict moral code of right and wrong to the point of becoming *legalistic*. Children adhere fanatically to rules of a game and respect authority. "It is against the law!" Moreover, this can be a dangerous stage for determining what is right or wrong, because children tend to follow a Pied Piper rather than thinking things through and coming to a rational decision about what they ought to do.
- **High school stage (15-18).** This is the final level at which adolescents make moral decisions based on an internalized set of moral principles to judge whether something is right or wrong. It is not based on blind obedience to authority. Young people who have developed an internalized moral code will not be affected by peer pressure or the desire for self-gratification.

2. Developing a Character-building Plan—an Analogy

Once upon a time in the land of parenting, there lived two builders. Both had been given the responsibility to construct a building. Both had been given the counsel to start early. ("Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" Proverbs 22:6.) Both had been given the guidelines from the Master Designer. Both had been given the h-o-t line number where the Master Designer could be reached, with the instruction to stay in touch. And both had all the necessary tools to accomplish the task.

The first builder knew the responsibility was his, and he knew the counsel, but when he began reading the guidelines he said, "These instructions are too general. It is so difficult to relate these ancient guidelines to conditions today." And the more detailed plans seemed too idealistic. "It is impossible for me to build in such a manner because of the kind of world I live in and because of so many pressing responsibilities. Besides, I want to know exactly how hard and how many times I pound on the nail to make it go in the right way, and these plans aren't that specific. I don't have time to call the Master Designer all the time. What will He think if I bother Him with such little things?" So he went his own way, and built a little here and a little there. He did this when his schedule permitted it, and when he felt like it. His building grew, but it toppled in the storm.

The second builder took his responsibility to build more seriously. To understand clearly the Master Designer's counsel, he read the guidelines from cover to cover, selecting those principles that he could use to develop his own set of plans that would meet his specific needs. He studied the designs developed by other successful builders, and rather than follow them blindly, he searched for the architectural principles that would apply to his unique situation.

What a job! It would have been much easier to follow blindly what others had done.

But in the guidelines of the Master Designer he found this challenge: "See, the Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it [build on it] as the Lord, the God of your fathers, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (Deuteronomy 1:21). And he took courage, picked up his tools, and began to build. He kept in constant contact with the Master Designer. He wasn't afraid to admit his lack of knowledge and to ask for help. He was thankful for the hot line!

He didn't do a perfect job, especially in the early days when he was new to the task. It takes time to learn. He pounded in a few bent nails. He even papered the wrong wall a time or two. But when this happened he said, "I'm sorry," and started again. Rather than hide his mistakes, he corrected them as soon as he became aware of them. Even though it took a little more time and patience, the results were worth it, for the building was nearly perfect.

After eighteen years of planning, pounding, and papering, the building, although not fully complete, was ready to stand on its own. And it did, through the wind and the storm. When people came to the housewarming they liked all of it from the inside out.

And the Master Designer said, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21). And he did.

3. An old man remarked, "When I was a little boy somebody gave me a cucumber in a bottle. The neck of the bottle was small, the cucumber very large. I wondered how it got in there. Out in the garden one day, I came upon a bottle that had slipped over a little green cucumber. Then I understood. The cucumber had grown large after it had been put in the bottle."

Building good habits or developing bad habits of character are like the cucumber in the bottle. If habits are repeated while children are young, it will be difficult to remove them when children are grown.

4. Kay Kuzma related the following experience. "I had a greenhouse one year and my tomato vines grew like weeds, but they had such spindly stems I had to brace them. Later I noticed a smaller plant growing outside the greenhouse, apparently from a dropped seed. I couldn't believe the difference in the plants. The stem on the outside plant was thick and sturdy. That convicted me of the value of a little windy weather. When things come too easily to a child, there is no lesson to develop character traits such as courage, perseverance, or thrift. If there has been no pain, there is no need for sympathy or compassion."

5. Kay Kuzma related an instance when her daughter Karrie had decided not to go with the family on a special trip. Airline tickets were purchased for the family members at a special price. Later, Karrie changed her mind and decided to go. The airfare, however, had increased. Karrie had to pay the difference of \$200 from her own savings. It was an expensive lesson, but Karrie admitted that it was a valuable lesson.

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Christlikeness in Relationships

by Lowell C. Cooper

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Theme

Building an atmosphere of Christlikeness—love, respect, beauty in relationships—in our relationships at home and in society.

Theme Text

Matthew 5:48

Presentation Notes

Throughout the following outline, superscripts such as ^{1,2,3} are used to indicate items from the section called **Sermon Illumination** which may be used for illustration. The addition of your personal illustrations will enhance the presentation.

Introduction

The text for our consideration is one which we have often heard. Its simple message hides a depth of meaning that challenges the greatest intellect. What does it mean to be perfect, like God and Jesus? Perhaps most Christians think of this text in connection with being free from sin. We have probably heard preachers explain that being perfect is being sinless. Surely this must be one of the important dimensions of perfection. Could there be others as well?

This command (or is it an invitation?) of Jesus is found in the Bible record of the Sermon on the Mount. Before saying these words Jesus had talked about righteousness (Matt. 5:17-20); about the spirit of true commandment-keeping (Matt. 5:21-30); about sinful thoughts; and about loving our enemies instead of taking revenge on those who wrong us. It is in connection with these ideas that Jesus calls for His followers to be perfect like their Father in heaven is perfect.

More than the absence of sin. We may conclude then that perfection deals with more than just the absence of sin. It also includes a correctness and beauty in attitudes and actions. Two people might play the same piece of music on the piano. One, who is beginning to learn how to play, may carefully play all the right notes yet we would not say that the music is perfect. The second player, an accomplished artist, will play the same notes but with a touch that brings a new dimension to the sound, and we respond enthusiastically because the music was perfect.

Doing the right thing in the most beautiful way. Similarly, in the normal activities of everyday life perfection involves more than just avoiding mistakes. It can also mean doing the right thing in the most beautiful way. For instance, it is right for parents to discipline their children. But there are poor ways of disciplining children and there are beautiful ways of doing it. Married people should speak to each other. But there are inappropriate ways of speaking to a marriage partner just as there are beautiful ways of doing so.¹ When Jesus invites us to be perfect I believe He is calling us to much more than the

absence of doing wrong. Instead He is challenging us to demonstrate the art of perfection in all that we are and do.

Ellen White reminds us that "higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached" (*Education*, p. 18). Suppose a friend of yours has a twin brother whom you have never met. You try to imagine what this twin brother is like. Then your friend says: "Why, he is just like me." Can we think of Godlikeness, or Christlikeness, in that way? Can you imagine Jesus describing you to the angels and saying, "Oh, that person, he/she is just like Me." What a magnificent tribute that would be.

I believe it is the Christian's privilege to develop the likeness of Jesus. In our meditation today we shall look at Christlikeness in human relationships—the way we think about and treat each other in families and in society. The hard part of Christian leadership in the home is how to be successful in working with people, in building an atmosphere of love, respect, and beauty in relationships. How easily two people can disagree over an incident or an idea. The matter that sparked the disagreement is insignificant—but the disagreement isn't. Words and actions are misunderstood. Feelings are disturbed. Tension heightens. Suspicion discolors viewpoints. Barriers come between. The life spirit is broken.

In our roles of correcting, advising, encouraging, counseling, supporting, and sometimes confronting, we are admonished to keep in mind the goal of Christlikeness. What can we learn from our Lord and His dealings with us? Perhaps the following points can be of some help to guide our thinking:

- He expresses constant good will toward us.
- He does not treat us as we deserve.
- He takes the initiative to bridge the distance between us.
- He forgives us readily.
- He knows our weaknesses and our strengths.
- He is committed to loving us.

Let us briefly consider each of these beautiful characteristics of Jesus.

Constant Good Will Toward Us

God holds people in high regard. He is attached to us by a stubborn love that will not let go. The Bible uses captivating word pictures to describe His commitment to us: "As a father has compassion on his children . . ." (Ps. 103:13); "As a hen gathers her chicks under her wings . . ." (Matt. 23:37); ". . . shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye" (Deut. 32:10); "You did not choose Me, but I chose you . . ." (John 15:16).

Every person has a high value in God's eyes regardless of talents or the lack of them. Our measurements of human worth—beauty, brains, wealth—are not the instruments God uses to determine our value to Him. He loves us regardless of what we are in human terms.²

We are not loved because we are worth much. But we are worth much because we are loved.

So often human love is expressed with conditions attached. We say "I love you," but we often mean "I love you if you are always good," or "I love you when you treat me nicely," or "I love you because you get good grades in your schoolwork." But God does not attach conditions to His love for us. He says "I love you" and His love is not dependent on what we do or say to Him. See Romans 8:35-38.

Doesn't Treat Us as We Deserve

Most Christians have a firmly held opinion about the absolute justice of God. And justice means, sooner or later, that wrong is punished and right is rewarded. In this troubled world it is sometimes comforting to think that all human behavior is weighed in an unerring balance and dealt with according to merits or deficiencies. But is this a correct picture of God?

"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities . . . As far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our transgression from us . . . He knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust . . ." (Psalm 103:8-14).

It may be a great injustice to Him if we view God as the cold, impartial, unfeeling judge of human conduct. It may be more correct to say that God makes mistakes, consistently—on the side of mercy. We would all cease to exist if justice were applied. In His dealing with our weaknesses God is not trying to get even with us.

When discipline and standards need to be enforced in our homes it would be well to remember not only the Golden Rule but also the way that God deals with His erring children. Someone observed that a child can endure any amount of discipline as long as he knows that he is loved. Let us remember that His discipline is with a view to our development, not our destruction.

Takes the Initiative to Re-establish Harmony

It is a natural human tendency to maintain the distance between ourselves and those who have hurt us. We leave it to the other person to take the first step in removing a barrier. But God is not like that. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The plan of redemption is not an afterthought. Nor is it a response to mankind's helplessness. It is not the intervention of a reluctant God finally answering the desperate plea of doomed humanity. The story of salvation is not about a lost person seeking God, but about God seeking and finding lost people. Someone described the Scriptures in these terms: The Old Testament is a record of humanity seeking God, the New Testament is a record of God seeking humanity. The stories of Luke 15 (the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost boy) are powerful illustrations of God doing everything He possibly can to restore harmony.

Incidentally, this is a basic argument in favor of active witnessing and evangelism. There are some who feel we should adopt a more passive witness. We must remember that God took the initiative in the divine rescue of a lost world. Today His ambassadors must find their place as partners in that divine initiative.

Christlikeness calls for us to take initiatives too. When relationships are broken, let us take the first steps to repair them. When people suffer, let us be about the business of rescue. "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" (Isaiah 58:6, 7).

Forgives Us Readily

A sinner does not need to beg forgiveness from God. It is His desire to forgive. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive . . . and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Forgiveness is a gem in human nature just as it is one of the most beautiful attributes of God.

Forgiveness enables us to rewrite history. The forgiveness of God is so complete that we become, in His sight, as though we had never sinned.

Does forgiveness become less valuable because of the ease with which God dispenses it? If we readily and quickly forgive, do we lessen the weight of wrong and thus encourage more of it? No! The one who experiences forgiveness knows its power to immunize against repeated offense. Recall the story of the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus. (See Luke 7:36-43.) Evidence suggests that this woman was Mary Magdalene who had experienced the forgiveness of Jesus in a most remarkable way.³

Knows Our Weaknesses

One of the contributions of the Roman Empire to modern civil law is the concept of equality. It is often distorted to convey the idea of equal punishment or equal reward. Equality, however, is not an arbitrary thing determined by some policy or code book. Circumstances differ, people are not always the same. A parent may discipline one child by the use of words. Discipline, to have the same effect on another child, may have to be physical.

In His dealings with us God takes into consideration the uniqueness of our own background and individuality. He knows where (and when) we were born. He knows our frailties. He does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. He shapes His treatment to fit the situation and the individual. His policy book is not an inflexible document.

Committed to Loving Us

One of the dominant characteristics of God revealed in Scripture is that He has bound Himself to us by an oath and a covenant. God has made up His mind about us. He is not waiting to decide whether or not we qualify for His blessings. Ellen G. White observes that in the gift of Jesus to this world God has identified Himself with us by ties that are never to be broken. It is our appreciation of His constant and steadfast love that motivates the spiritual life.

Love within a family grows best in an atmosphere of mutual commitment. Isn't that really what the marriage vows represent, a commitment to love even when there are obstacles and challenges to continued love? "I take you to be my lawfully wedded spouse, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow."

Someday there might be vows that we can take as parents. Vows which we would express, over and over, to our children so they will be surrounded by an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance. Vows that will make our homes a haven of refuge where our children will always feel safe and cherished. That is the way God deals with us.

It may seem, at first glance, that these characteristics of His dealings with us present Jesus as a weak and yielding God. However, the more we consider these elements of His relationship to us, the more we shall come to appreciate His commitment to us. From Him we learn the principles of conduct, of human value and of restoration. Being perfect is not just refraining from sin. If that were so, we would all be perfect in our sleep.

Perfection is the godlikeness that can be demonstrated in our words, attitudes, and behaviors toward one another. Jesus Christ our Lord is the pattern for our lives. Through appreciation of His ways with us we will grow to be like Him in our earthly relationships.

Sermon Illumination

1. A story that comes from Jewish literature tells of a Rabbi who sent his servant to the local market to buy something good. The servant returned with a package of tongue. The Rabbi next sent his servant to the market to buy something bad. The servant returned, again with a package of tongue.

The Rabbi sternly questioned the behavior of his servant. Why should he bring the same item when what the Rabbi wanted was something to contrast between good and bad?

The servant replied that when tongue (speech) is good there is nothing better, but when tongue (speech) is bad there is nothing worse.

2. Many years ago, while we were holding pastoral responsibilities in northern Canada, my wife demonstrated some loving care to an elderly member of the church. She prepared special meals which we then took to his house. She washed the dishes and cleaned the house on many occasions. After the man died we discovered that he had written a small note in his will to say that the kitchen stool in his house should be given to my wife. It was a homemade stool, a thing for practical use, and really not worth much. In each of our subsequent moves, in Canada and overseas, I felt that we should sell the stool because it wasn't worth much and could easily be replaced.

However, my wife has steadfastly refused to permit the sale of that stool. It's value to her cannot be measured in terms of money. She insists on keeping it, not because we need it but because she loves it. For a long time I could not agree with or understand my wife's views about that old piece of handiwork. Gradually I have come to learn that it was her love, not its usefulness, that gave the stool its amazing value. I think that this is the way God looks at us.

3. Corrie Ten Boom, one of the heroes of World War II, assisted many Jewish people in their escape from the dangers of arrest, and possibly being killed. She and her sister were caught and detained in the infamous prison camps. Corrie's sister did not survive the prison camp experience. Corrie did, however, and following the war she travelled extensively to urge a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness among all peoples.

After one of her meetings, in which she spoke about the beauty of God forgiving us and the need for us to forgive one another, she stood at the church entrance to greet people as they left the meeting. Among those who came past was a man she recognized to be one of the prison guards who had so violently mistreated the prison camp inmates. He now reached out his hand to greet her. Corrie was frozen with resentment, and could not speak, or shake the man's hand. She silently prayed, and suddenly felt the warmth of forgiveness flow into her heart. After a brief silence she clasped the man's hand and exclaimed, "Isn't forgiveness beautiful."

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The Newcomer

Andy Roberts dangled his legs over the treehouse platform in the old oak behind his parent's garage. He nudged his best friend Joey beside him.

"Here comes that new kid Dalton." He pointed to a blond boy just entering the alley from a backyard gate three houses up the block. From their perch, Andy and Joey had a bird's-eye view of the neighborhood. "Dalton! What a geeky name!"

"I don't know. I heard his mom tell my mom how glad she was they moved here because where they lived before there weren't any other 10-year-old boys to play with." Joey leaned forward a little and peered at the boy, "He looks OK to me."

Andy felt a little stab of jealousy. Joey was his best, his *very* best friend. What if they played with this new kid, and it turned out that Joey liked *him* better? He leaned forward too. "He's got glasses! What a nerd—"

"Ssshh!"

By this time the new kid was nearly underneath them. He was so interested in what he carried in his hand that he hadn't even noticed the two boys in the treehouse.

"What's that he's got?" Joey whispered. Andy shook his head. The boy below held some sort of box with a thin wire antenna wiggling out of one corner.

"Let's ask." Before Andy could disagree, Joey spoke up.

"Hey, kid!"

The boy jumped and looked around him.

"Up here," Joey said.

The boy tilted his head backward until he located Andy and Joey on their platform. He smiled.

"Hi. My name's Dalton. Who are you?"

"I'm Joey." After a few seconds Joey poked Andy in the ribs.

"I'm Andy." But he didn't say it very nicely. He would have been perfectly happy just to spy on this new kid, but Joey had to go and spoil it.

"What do you have?" Joey asked.

"Watch." Dalton pointed up the alley toward the open gate he had come out of. He pressed a button on the box in his hand, and it began to make a whiny, buzzing noise.

"I don't see anything," Andy grumbled.

"It's a remote-control car!" Joey was already scrambling down the tree trunk.

The remote-control car zoomed down the alley toward the boys, its oversized wheels kicking up little spurts of gravel and dust. Bright sunlight flashed off the cherry-red paint.

"Boy, that's neat!" Joey said excitedly. "Come on, Andy! Come down and look!"

Andy climbed down the tree in slow motion. Just what he had been afraid of. This new kid probably had all kinds of neat stuff, and now Joey would never play with *him* again.

He jumped to the ground and strolled over to the other boys. "Neat," he said. He looked toward Dalton, then raised his eyebrows. "Hey, what's that *thing* in your ear?" Andy asked, hoping to distract Joey from the car.

Dalton blushed and pushed at a rock embedded in the ground with the toe of his sneaker. "A hearing aid. I don't hear very well," he said in a low voice.

"Hey, Dalton, where did you get this?" Joey asked, pointing to the car.

"I made it."

Joey's mouth dropped open. "You *made* it?"

"Yeah, I found the body and stuff at a thrift store; then I just kept scrounging parts until I had enough to put it together. I haven't really had a

chance to try it out. I was going to run it around in the apartment parking lot down the street. Want to come?"

"Sure!" Joey stood and brushed off his pants. "You coming, Andy?"

Andy shook his head.

Dalton picked up the car, and he and Joey started down the street. After they had gone a few steps, Joey turned again.

"You sure?" he called.

Andy nodded his head, glad that at least they couldn't see the tears burning his eyes; and he walked slowly into his house...

The next few days were unhappy ones for Andy.

"Joey doesn't want to play with *me* anymore," he told his mother when she asked what was troubling him. "He's too busy with that new kid, Dalton."

"Why don't you all play together?"

"Oh, Mom, Dalton's a geek. He's got glasses, and he can't hear—he has to wear this thing in his ear. He's a nerd."

"Andy!" Mother's voice sounded shocked, and Andy blushed. "What an ugly thing to say!"

Inside, Andy knew that what he had said was cruel, but the strong feelings welled up inside him. "Well, I don't care. It's true," Andy insisted. "Joey's supposed to be *my* friend, not Dalton's. It's not fair."

Mother sat on the couch and patted the cushion next to her. "Come here and sit with me for a minute."

Andy dragged his feet across the carpet and flopped down next to her. Mother put her arm around him and gave him a little squeeze. "You feel angry with Dalton because it seems he took your best friend from you."

His mother's squeeze felt good. Dalton scuffed at the carpet with his foot and muttered, "Yes, and I'm angry with Joey, too, for going with him. He's all excited about the radio-controlled car

that Dalton built. He's forgotten all about our plans for the treehouse."

Mother pulled him closer. "It really hurt when your special friendship with Joey got interrupted by Dalton."

His mom seemed to know exactly what was going on inside him.

"Honey, we all feel that way sometimes, but Joey's not some toy that you can keep all to yourself and not share with anyone else. He has a perfect right to be friends with anyone he wants to."

"But he was my friend first." He still felt jealous inside.

Mother went right on, "And, meanwhile, you're missing out on a lot. You know, things are more fun to have when you share them with other people. And it's the same with friends. Not only are you missing Joey, you're missing out on the fun of getting to know Dalton and having him as a friend."

Andy's strong feelings bubbled up again. He interrupted his mother and blurted out, "I don't want him as a friend. Everybody at school laughs at him because he can't throw a ball and he can't make a basket. Mom, if his glasses fall off, he can't even walk without falling all over stuff! Who wants a friend like that?"

It was hard for mother to hear Andy say such harsh things about another child. "It makes me very sad to hear things like that, Andy." He could feel Mother's sadness. "Because, whether we think so or not, I'm sure Dalton is very special to his parents, just as you are to Dad and me."

She went on, "He is very special to Jesus also. And I believe Jesus will help us love each other. Love isn't something you put into a measuring cup and give Joey half and me some and Daddy some, and when it's all gone you can't love anyone else. It works just the opposite. The more love you give, the more Jesus gives you, so there's plenty for everyone. Love isn't selfish."

After that Mother and Andy sat quietly beside each other on the couch for a while, with Mother's arm snuggled around him. Neither of them said anything. Then suddenly she tickled Andy, and he giggled.

"Now, I think you should see if Joey and Dalton want to play."

Andy skipped into the room he shared with his little brother Sam. Maybe Mother was right. He picked his baseball glove off his dresser and

grabbed his bat from behind the door. Maybe it *would* be more fun with three. At least they would have an extra person to help chase the ball. He went off to find Joey and Dalton.

Continued next week

Adapted from "Dalton Moves In" and "Andy Hurts Dalton's Feelings" by Melinda Monaghan, *Primary Treasure*, February 27 and March 6, 1993.

Pain and Peace

In the previous story, "The Intruder," Dalton had moved into the neighborhood. Andy did not like Dalton, but his friend Joey did. Andy was jealous of Joey and Dalton's new friendship and wouldn't play with either of them. Mother had helped Andy to decide to at least give friendship with Dalton a try.

When Andy Roberts went looking for Dalton and Joey, he found them in Joey's backyard, hunched over a bunch of screws and washers and nuts and bolts spread out on the picnic table.

"Hey, guys, you wanna play some ball?" he asked.

"Andy!" As Joey looked up, his face brightened. "You said you were sick!"

"Wel-l-l, I feel a lot better now," Andy said. "What're you doing?"

"The axle on the radio-controlled car broke," Joey explained. "Dalton's trying to fix it."

"Oh," said Andy. "But how about some ball, instead? Maybe there are some guys down at the park, and we could get a game going."

Joey and Dalton looked at each other. Andy sensed they weren't sure about playing with him. Suddenly, he forgot all that Mother had said. Jealousy began to squirm through him again.

"Well," he said, tapping his bat against the ground impatiently. "Do you want to go or not?"

"Dalton's not supposed to run around a whole lot," Joey said. "His mom says sometimes he has trouble breathing. I don't know if he would be able to go."

"Come on, Joey. You haven't played with *me* all week." Andy's voice was close to a whine.

"Go ahead, Joey," Dalton said. "It's OK." Carefully he laid the bolts he'd been squeezing in his hand on the table. "Maybe we can figure this out another time."

"Well, OK, if you're sure." Joey swung his legs over the bench and stood up. "See you."

"Bye."

"Honestly, Joey," Andy said as they walked out of the backyard. "What do you want to hang around

with him for? What a joke. He can't see, he can't hear, he can't breathe. Gimme a break!"

It was a cruel and cutting remark. Neither one of them saw Dalton's tears soak into the rough wood of the picnic table as he gathered up the parts to his car.

The next day Andy went looking for Joey again. When he didn't find him at home, he decided to go to Dalton's house. A thin, pale woman answered his knock at the door. She stood looking at him, her forehead creased into a slight frown.

"Is Joey here?" Andy asked.

"Yes." The corners of the woman's mouth lifted into a pleasant smile. "You must be Andy Roberts. I'm Dalton's mother, Mrs. Williams."

"Pleased to meet you," Andy mumbled. He felt kind of ashamed. He hadn't been very nice to Dalton, and yet Mrs. Williams was treating him like she had no idea how mean he had been!

"Joey's with Dalton in his room. Here, I'll show you." She led him through their small house.

"Dalton," Mrs. Williams called. "You've got company."

The door to Dalton's room opened, and Dalton peered around the doorjamb. "Oh, hi."

"You boys have a nice time together," Mrs. Williams said. "I'll have lunch ready in about half an hour. Would you like to stay, Andy?"

"Um—OK. Thank you," he said, remembering his manners.

"Well, come on in, I guess," Dalton said. He gestured with his hand, and Andy walked into the room.

Once inside, his eyes popped wide. Every wall in the room was covered with books, models, rocks, jars, cans—you name it, it was there.

"Hey, Andy!" Joey sat cross-legged on Dalton's bed, half of a large gray rock cradled in his hands. "Come look at this."

Andy looked. The rock Joey held had been split in half, and the cut surface glistened like glass where it had been polished to show off the swirling patterns inside. "Isn't it neat?" Joey asked.

Andy nodded. "Can you guys play?"

"We're working on a model rocket," Joey said. "Dalton's showing me how the booster goes together, and then maybe we can launch it when his dad comes home."

"Dalton can do that?" Andy asked, puzzled. Dalton nodded. "How do you know how to do that?"

"Me and my dad do stuff like this. He shows me a lot. And you can find out a lot from books too," Dalton said. "Hey, Joey," Dalton turned to Joey, "Come here a second. I want you to help me with something."

Both boys left the room. Andy wandered around, taking a closer look at the shelves. Models in various stages of construction were displayed on one set of shelves. Andy was so absorbed in what he saw that he didn't hear the two boys come back in.

"Hey, Andy, I think your mother's calling you," Dalton said.

"Huh?"

"I heard your mother calling. I think she wants you home right away," Dalton repeated. "Didn't you hear her Joey?"

Joey studied the scuffed tops of his sneakers as he nodded.

"Well, I guess I better go," Andy said. To his surprise, he really wanted to stay. If Dalton had collected all this stuff and knew what to do with it, he might not be that weird after all. "See you guys later."

Mother was in the kitchen kneading bread dough when Andy trotted through the back door. "What are you doing home?" she asked. "I thought you went to play."

"You called me to come home."

Mother shook her head, "No, I didn't."

"But—" Andy's chest began to feel funny, as if there were a big lump of rock squeezing to get out. "Dalton and Joey said they heard you call me."

Mother shook her head again. He blinked his eyes because they were starting to burn. "Th—they said you wanted me home right now!"

As Mother watched, the funny feeling in Andy's chest exploded into a storm of sobs. "They didn't want to play with me!" he sobbed. Mother put her arms around Andy and pulled him close, patting his head while he cried. Then she sat down on the couch and hugged Andy to her side.

"Your feelings are really hurt, aren't they?" she asked.

Andy nodded, unable to talk.

"It's very sad when someone treats you badly and doesn't want to play with you, isn't it?"

Andy nodded again.

Mother was quiet for a while as Andy sobbed and then she said, "Do you think that Dalton felt the same way when you said you didn't know why Joey wanted to play with him because he was such a joke?"

Andy stared at the floor, feeling his cheeks tingle with shame. He hadn't realized that Mother knew what he had said to Joey about Dalton.

"The reason I know what you said is that Mrs. Williams came to visit me after you and Joey left Dalton at Joey's last week. She told me how hurt Dalton was. Andy, I was very upset with you, and I intended to punish you for being so mean, but Mrs. Williams said she thought it would be better if we let you boys work things out among yourselves, and after thinking about it, I agreed. And, since this has happened, I know she was right. I don't think there is any other way you would understand how badly you've made Dalton feel, except by experiencing it yourself. Am I right?"

"I don't know," Andy mumbled.

"Sweetheart, Dalton is a boy just like you. It makes no difference that he has to wear glasses or a

hearing aid or that he has to take asthma medicine. All it means is that his handicaps are on the outside where everyone can see them, not hidden inside like yours are."

"I'm not handicapped!" Andy snapped. "He's handicapped, but I'm not!"

"Well, Andy," Mother's voice grew firm as she put her hands on Andy's cheeks and looked into his eyes, "You are troubled by a selfish spirit and by jealousy, and by not caring about other people's feelings. And, Andy, those are really a kind of handicap. They are a lot worse than Dalton's."

Andy thought for a long while. Then he looked at Mother and said, "I don't want to be handicapped inside, Mom. It really does make me feel bad." Andy rubbed his eyes with his fists until they were clear of tears.

Mother smiled. "Let's pray, Andy, and you can ask Jesus to help you not be jealous of Dalton so you and he and Joey can all be friends and have fun together, just like Jesus means you to." She took Andy's hands in hers, and they knelt together. Andy squeezed his eyes shut tight.

"Dear Jesus," he prayed. "I am so sorry for being so ugly to Dalton. Please help me not to be jealous of him, even if he does know more neat stuff than I do. Help us all three to be good friends. And thank You for listening to me, even though I know I hurt You by being so mean. Amen."

Mother hugged Andy hard. As they stood up the doorbell rang.

"I'll get it," Andy said. He swung the front door open and was surprised to see Dalton and Joey standing on the porch.

"My mom sent me over," Dalton said, twisting the toe of his sneaker on the rope welcome mat. He looked at Andy, then back down at his shoe. "She said I should apologize for tricking you," he mumbled. Joey blushed.

"That's OK," Andy said. Dalton's eyebrows formed little V's over his eyes. "I was the one who was being a nerd. I'd like to be friends, if you're not too mad at me."

Dalton grinned, "I'd like that."

"So, come on." Andy said. "Let's go work on the rocket. I'd like to know how you can build all this stuff."

"Hey, great!" Joey shouted, clapping Dalton on the back with relief. He grabbed Andy by the arm, dragging him out the front door. "Wait till you see this stuff! This is great! We're going to have so much fun!"

The End

Adapted from "Peace!" by Melinda Monaghan, *Primary Treasure*, March 13, 1993.

The Tummy-ache

by Jeannette Pelton

"Mommy!," shouted Maria. "Mommy!" It was late at night as Maria called from her bed. "My tummy hurts."

Mother came into her bedroom and turned on the light. "Where do you hurt?" asked Mommy. She felt her head. "Oh dear, you have a fever, too." Mother felt Maria's tummy. When she pushed on it, she howled out loud. "I'm going to get dressed and take you into the clinic."

Maria cried on the way to the doctor. Her head seemed to swim, and whenever Mommy hit a bump she thought she would throw up. Finally, they reached the doctor's clinic. Then she did throw up.

The nurse heard Mommy's description and took Maria back to the examining room. The doctor took some blood out of her arm. Maria tried hard not to cry, but it was very scary. Mommy held her hand. The doctor looked very serious.

"I'm afraid Maria has got appendicitis. She'll have to have her appendix taken out right away. It might break open and then she could get much worse. She might even die. I've called the hospital, and they will be waiting for you."

Mommy carried Maria out to the car for the two-block trip to the hospital. They went into the emergency room. A man dressed in green met them and had mother put Maria on a bed with wheels. Maria tightened her hold around Mommy's neck. "I'm afraid, Mommy. Don't go away."

Mommy smiled at her. "You don't need to be afraid. Remember what Jesus said? 'I will give my angels charge over you to keep you safe.' Your angel is right here. Part of you is sick and the doctors need to fix it. You won't feel anything because they will give you medicine so you will sleep. When you wake up, it will be all over and we can soon go home. Don't be afraid. Let's have a prayer before you go with the doctor." Maria let go

and folded her hands and closed her eyes. "Dear Jesus, please help the doctors make Maria well again. Don't let her be too scared and don't let it hurt too much. Help her to be very brave. Thank you, Jesus. Amen." Mommy kissed Maria and the man wheeled the bed away.

The next morning when Maria woke up, Mommy was waiting by the bed with her teddy bear and a new puzzle.

"How do you feel?" asked Mommy.

Maria thought for a minute. "I'm thirsty. My tummy doesn't hurt as bad."

"Doctor says we can take you home later this afternoon, here's a drink of water."

Maria looked down at the bandage on her stomach. It looked so big it frightened her.

"Do I have a very big hole in my stomach?" she whispered.

"No, you don't. The doctor took out the spoiled appendix and sewed you back up. We'll go to Dr. Hatton to have the stitches removed end of next week."

Later that day, Maria and Mother went home. Mother put Maria to bed and told her to take a little nap while she made supper. She closed her eyes but couldn't quite seem to go to sleep. She wondered what stitches looked like. She wondered if she lifted the edge of the bandage, could she see them? Just as she was about to try mother came back in. "I thought you might like some apple juice," she smiled. "It is going to be hard to stay in bed for a few days, so I thought you might like to watch a nature video. I've asked your sister to bring a couple of them home from school." Maria drank her juice. Mother studied her a minute.

"What's the matter? Do you hurt? Would it feel good if I rubbed your back?"

"It only hurts a little. But when I sit up I get dizzy."

"That will go away soon. It's always like that after an operation."

"Mommy, why did my appendix spoil?"

"What do you mean?"

"I eat good food, I sleep and drink water, and everything, so why did my appendix spoil?"

Mother thought for a minute. "You didn't do anything wrong, if that's what's bothering you. Good health habits will help you stay well and help you keep from getting sick, but sometimes things happen just because of sin. There isn't anything you can do about it, except take care of yourself and give your life to Jesus. He gives strength to resist disease and be happy."

"How long will it be before I am all better?"

"By Sabbath, you should be able to be up and out of bed. That's two days. You won't be well enough to go to church this week, but you will be next week. I'll call your teacher and tell her. Anything she wants to send home for you, your sister can bring. In three weeks, you won't even know you had been sick, except that you'll have a little scar where the bad appendix was taken out."

"Will it always be there?"

"Yes, it will fade a little as time passes, but it will still be there."

Maria thought for minute. "Why didn't Jesus stop my tummy from hurting?"

"But He did," answered Mommy. "Jesus helped the doctor know how to make you better. And He made your body so it can fix itself. There are little white blood cells working hard to kill any germs that might have gotten into the wound. There are other cells whose job it is to mend the skin and muscles, and more red blood cells are being made in your bones. Jesus made your whole body in such a wonderful way that it can repair itself. Sometimes it needs help, like when the doctor helped you by taking away the spoiled appendix, but most of the time your body works really well. That's why it's important to take good care of it by eating good food, and getting exercise, and resting, and drinking lots of water."

"If my body is doing all that work, it's probably getting sleepy," said Maria. "I think I can take my nap now."

"Good. When your sister comes back, you two can watch the video while I finish making supper." Mother smiled and pulled the drapes shut. "If you need anything, just call me. I'll leave your door open."

"OK, Mommy."

"Have a good little sleep, Maria."

Divine Design for Sexuality

A Seminar on Sexuality from a Biblical Perspective

by Karen and Ron Flowers, Directors, Family Ministries, General Conference

Theme

This seminar presents human sexuality as an integral part of human nature, created by God and redeemed by Him through His salvation act in Christ. Through our acceptance of His plan for our sexuality and the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us, we glorify God. The intent of this seminar is to discover how to bring God that glory and how a Christian understanding of sexuality can serve to enrich our lives and our marriages.

Setting

The program is designed specifically for Christian couples in a marriage enrichment setting. Though not limited to a certain age group, the specific target audience would be those married some ten years or more, who may be experiencing the disillusionment stage of marriage (Augsburger, 1988; *Family Ministries Planbook*, 1994) and could benefit from an enhanced understanding of sexuality and from communication together about sexual issues in marriage. The parts of the program may be spread over a series of evenings or, preferably, linked together in a weekend retreat.

Objectives

The program is intended to 1) impart information regarding the biblical teaching about sexuality and 2) stimulate attitudinal change in participants, preparing the way for long-term behavioral change as participants act upon the insights received and incorporate them into their lives.

Format

Each part of the seminar is designed to include lecture modules and a participatory exercise, either involving the group, the individuals themselves, or the participants as married couples.

What follows throughout this paper is an outline of the core elements of the seminar. A synopsis of each part is followed by a brief description of key thoughts, specific strategies, and/or exercises that may be used.

Introduction

The Bible never uses the terms *sex*, *sexual*, or *sexuality*. However, throughout Scripture there are many references to this aspect of human life. Early in the sacred text we read that "Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she conceived . . ." (Gen. 4:1), obviously a reference to their sexual experience. Elsewhere husbands are counseled, "Rejoice in the wife of your youth May her breasts satisfy always, may you ever be captivated by her love . . ." (Prov. 5:18, 19). At times the biblical references are shaped negatively as in Exodus 20:14, where God etches in stone the commandment, "You shall not commit adultery." To Christian believers Paul writes, "It is God's will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen . . ." (1 Thess. 4:3-5).

Were we to state the positive principle that lies behind these references, it would be, "You shall live in harmony with the divine design for your sexuality." Some may find the phrase *divine design for sexuality* a curious one, yet as the various Scripture references on the topic are considered, a mosaic can be seen, a design, God's plan for this prominent feature of our lives.

Part I — The Bible's Wholesome View of Sexuality

Synopsis. The Bible's attitude toward sexuality is a wholesome one. Acceptance of the biblical view opens the way for a healthier understanding of ourselves, our marital relationships, and our overall spiritual experience with God.

Confusing views of sexuality within Christianity. "If any institution has a bad record of teaching with regard to sex, it is the Christian church" (Achte-meier, 1976, p. 154). Some think that the apostle Paul had a somewhat ambivalent view of sexuality:

Paul's view of sexuality and women was rather ambivalent, deriving both from the immorality of much Greco-Roman culture and from the expectation he shared with most early Christians that Jesus would return soon, bringing the world to an end. (Hyde, 1990, p. 587)

However, Paul actually had a very positive and affirming view of women and sexuality that stemmed from his great understanding of the redemptive activity of Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 6:18-20). What is more likely is that later Christian theologians tended to understand the "sins of the flesh" (Col. 2:11, KJV) primarily in sexual terms and thus gave Christianity a bias against sexuality.

Increasingly tainted by dualistic philosophies, leaders such as Origen, Augustine, and Jerome treated the sexual function of the body with suspicion, even disdain. Quipped Jerome, "Marriage populates the earth, virginity populates heaven" (Grenz, 1990, xiv). Celibacy was promoted as preferable to marriage and was perpetuated through the centuries until the Reformation. Even today, things spiritual are often valued more highly than things physical. Sex and sin are often synonymous in our minds (Achte-meier, 1976).

Group activity.

In the following four clusters of references from the Law, the Prophets, the Writings, and the New Testament, how is sexuality portrayed? What is the biblical attitude toward the human body?

1) Gen. 1:27, 31; 2:7, 23-25; 39:6b-9; Ex. 20:14; 20:17; Lev. 18:6-23.

2) Isa. 54:5; 62:4, 5; Jer. 3:14; Eze. 16:18.

3) Ps. 63:1; 84:1, 2; 139:13-16; Prov. 5:15-19; Song 7:1-10.

4) 1 Thess. 4:3-5; 5:23; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:18-20; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-29; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 21:2.

Summary of key points from the Bible study. 1) Sexuality is "very good" at creation. 2) Notwithstanding the Fall, God does not change His mind about the role of sexuality, but rather regulates sexual conduct to preserve its meaning to the human community. 3) The prophets' use of the marriage metaphor to describe the divine-human relationship exalts human sexuality. 4) The Bible does not blush to speak openly of the body, its sexual attractiveness, and the delight to be found in the sexual communion of husband and wife. 5) The New Testament confirms a holistic view of human nature; the body has been redeemed by Christ and is a means for glorifying God. 6) As in the Old Testament, the use of the sexual/marriage analogy for the divine-human covenant is instructive in two ways: a) it suggests that from human marital intimacy we can learn something precious about God's love for us and b) from the objective revelation in Scripture of Christ's union with the Church we can find a relationship model for husbands and wives (Grenz, 1990).

Key quotation.

In the Biblical view, human beings are always considered as psychophysical wholes. . . . The life of sex can never be separated, for the Christian, from the life of spirituality. It is fully as possible to violate or to fulfill our relation to God through sexual activity as through prayer or service. (Achte-meier, 1976, pp. 157, 159)

Part II — Human Pair Bonding: Science Conforms With Scripture

Synopsis. Scientific studies indicate that a common pattern of male-female pair bonding appears to be universally present among humans. Stages in pair bonding correspond to the biblical progressive experiences of leaving, cleaving, and one-flesh (Gen. 2:24, KJV).

Bible study of bonding. The Scripture's word for bonding is *unite* (*cleave*—KJV; *join*—NKJV), such as in marriage (Gen. 2:24), in friendship (Prov. 18:24), between individuals and God (Deut. 10:20), and between objects (2 Sam. 23:10). The Bible, particularly the Song of Songs, describes the involvement of the five senses in male-female pair bonding: sight (Job 31:1; Song 4:9); hearing/voice (Judges 16:16; Song 2:14); touch (Prov. 5:20; Song 1:2; 2:6; 7:8); scent (Song 1:3, 12; 2:13; 7:8, 13); taste (Song 2:3; 5:1; 8:2).

Stages of pair bonding. While there is obviously much social influence in the development of sexual scenarios or "scripts" which tell us "who, what, when, where, and why we do what we do sexually" (Hyde, 1990, p. 36), zoologist/anthropologist Desmond Morris has mapped twelve observable sequential behaviors in pair bonding that tend to be present in all human cultures (Joy, 1985; Morris, 1971). The universality and predictability of these behaviors suggest a more primal, innate "script" derived from a common source in Creation.

These twelve steps (see Handout at end of chapter) are: 1) eye to body—discovery and arousal of interest; 2) eye to eye—return of the look of interest; 3) voice to voice—verbal communication and emotional appeal; 4) hand to hand—physical contact, casual touch; 5) arm to shoulder—belonging, protection of the relationship; 6) arm to waist—growing closeness and emotional investment; 7) face to face—increasing openness, self-disclosure; 8) hand to head—deepening trust; 9) hand to body—respect, knowledge, acceptance of the other; 10) mouth to breast—dependency, giving oneself to the other; 11) hand to genital—stimulation, desire to pleasure the other; 12) genital to genital—complete physical union.

Implications of the pair bonding sequence. Joy (1985, p. 43) suggests that the steps in Morris's observed scheme "correspond, overall, to the sequence laid down in the Judeo-Christian blueprint. In Genesis 2, which is quoted both by Jesus and Paul, there are three distinct movements:

1. *Leave* father and mother/Morris, steps 1-3.
2. *Cleave*: cling/hug spouse/Morris, steps 4-9.
3. *Union*, one flesh, naked, unashamed/Morris 10-12."

What transpires throughout the development of a relationship between a man and a woman before marriage can provide a solid foundation for their commitment to each other in the marriage itself. Further, marriages are enhanced as a couple repeatedly reenact the behaviors and experience again the feelings of their first bonding sequence, or ensure that all the steps are traversed to a bonding sequence in which parts of the sequence may have been initially by-passed or hurried over.

An additional advantage to understanding this apparently inborn sexual script is that alien bonding, the formation of a pair bond with one other than one's spouse, can be detected and aborted (compare the warning against alien bonding in Proverbs 5).

Couple activity. Couples will first write down their thoughts, then dialogue together on the following:

- 1) Things that are very good about our bonding and sexual experiences.
- 2) Things about our bonding and sexual experiences which are pretty good, but which could be improved.
- 3) Things I can do to help make our bonding and sexual experiences even better.

Part III — The Song of Songs: A Mini-Handbook on Sexuality

Synopsis. The Song of Songs is one whole Bible book devoted to the sexual experience between a man and a woman. Male-female intimacy as it develops in romance, friendship, and marital commitment is portrayed. Male-female sexual response differences are also described.

Building romance into marriage. The Song shows the importance of compliments that make one's lover feel appreciated (2:2, 3; 4:2-5; 7:4), of care for one's personal appearance (4:7; 5:10), of creating a romantic setting for lovemaking (1:16, 17; 2:10), and of giving each other the gift of time and undivided attention (2:17; 5:2).

Married friends. Shulamith, the woman in the Song (Delitzsch, 1950), declares, "This is my friend (*rea*)" (5:16). Solomon uses the same Hebrew word in its feminine form *rayah* as an affectionate name for his wife (1:9, 15, etc.). *Rayati* ("my love"—NKJV; "my darling"—NIV) may be literally translated as "my friend" (Carr, 1984).

Commitment. "Christian marriage is *committed* marriage. That is its basic characteristic" (Achte-meier, 1976, p. 41). Grenz (1990) suggests that inward commitment to marriage must be demonstrated in at least two foundational outward expressions, the declaration of the covenant in the presence of witnesses and the repeated reenactment of the covenant through the experience of sexual intercourse. Both these outward expressions are present in the Song. Additionally, the statement, "My lover is mine, and I am his" (2:16) constitutes a miniature marriage covenant statement spoken by the woman. This she repeats in a slightly different form in Song 6:3. The testimony of the man to commitment, while he highly praises the qualities of the woman and declares "my dove, my perfect one, is unique" (6:9) is less effusive than hers. Perhaps this is why she seems to plead for an assurance that she is set as a seal upon his heart (8:6, 7).

Couple exercise. Couples first take a few moments to think about and write down their responses to the following unfinished statements and then discuss them with each other.

- 1) "I feel loved when . . . "
- 2) "My spouse feels loved when . . . "

Differences in loving for him and her. Men can quickly become aroused romantically through visual stimuli and by touching their mates. Note Solomon's many references to seeing her face (2:14), delighting in her beauty (4:1ff; 6:4ff; 7:1ff), being captured by her hair (7:5), holding the branches (7:8), and embracing her (2:6; 8:3). Romantically, women respond best in an atmosphere that is unhurried, with time for words of love and affirmation accompanied by closeness and caressing. Shulamith yearns to be with him (1:7), desires his companionship and friendship (2:3, 10; 5:16; 7:11ff), fears separation from him (3:1; 5:6) and calls for his committed love (8:6, 7). She enjoys having him kiss, hold, and caress her (1:2; 2:6; 8:3) (Flowers, 1992).

Key quotation.

Our marriage bed is a holy place in the sight of God. We must be careful to maintain this viewpoint concerning sex in marriage, for it is God's. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. . . ." Sex apart from marriage is spelled out as obviously wrong. Sex in marriage is wonderfully right. Let us never forget it! (Wheat, 1977, p. 23)

Closing

Couple exercise. Couples first write their responses to the following statements, then dialog together.

- 1) New insights I have gained from our seminar experience.
- 2) Ways in which our love, romance, and commitment are very good.
- 3) Aspects of our love, romance, and commitment that are pretty good, but where some improvement is needed.
- 4) Things I can do to improve our love, romance, and commitment.

Symbolic gift. As a closing exercise, distribute a sheet of paper to each participant. With this paper each couple will create a symbolic gift, either by writing on the paper, folding it, or tearing and shaping it. Each then will give this gift to the other, expressing its symbolism.

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Stages in Pair Bonding

naked, unashamed.”

12. Genital to Genital

11. Hand to Genital

10. Mouth to Breast

9. Hand to Body

8. Hand to Head

7. Face to Face

6. Arm to Waist

5. Arm to Shoulder

4. Hand to Hand

3. Voice to Voice

2. Eye to Eye

1. Eye to Body

Genesis, Jesus, and Desmond Morris

**“For this reason
a man shall . . .**

one flesh . . .

cleave . . .

leave . . .

*Jesus says,
“What God
joins
together
let no one
put asunder.”*

Sequence for establishing life-long, exclusive, one-flesh bond.

Joy, D. (1990). *Sex, strength and the secrets of becoming a man*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.

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Families That Stay Together

An Enrichment Seminar for Parents and Teenagers

by Sue Murray, Parents' Services Coordinator, Berrien Springs Public Schools

and Don Murray, Dean of Men, Andrews University

Introduction for Seminar Leaders

Much has been said about the problems families face, and in the 1990's it is no secret that many families are in crisis. This program is designed to promote growth in the relationship between pre-teens/teenagers and their parents. It is a program of enrichment and education, rather than therapy. It has a positive focus and is primarily relational, rather than didactic.

The activities included in this model cover Friday evening through Saturday evening. However, the program may be adapted for use as a series over several days or weeks. Also, depending on local circumstances, a Sunday morning activity could be included in the weekend format, such as a special breakfast, a nature outing (a canoe or boating trip, a hike, a rock-climbing expedition), or any other type of activity that would build family cohesion and create memories.

Although this program has an admittedly narrow focus, one or more of the following outcomes could result:

- The local church would implement a regular family night.
- Families would be encouraged to set up their own family time activities (with ideas provided by church leadership or a group of members who are committed to family enrichment).
- Other seminars/meetings would be held dealing with positive communication skills, conflict resolution, self-esteem, and understanding adolescent development.
- The particular needs of a family or families would be detected and appropriate intervention or counseling provided for them by qualified individuals.

Before the weekend. To prepare yourself as a leader, we suggest you do the following:

- Become thoroughly familiar with your plans. Practice your spoken parts aloud.
- Take time for yourself. Schedule adequate time for rest, food, and contemplation.
- Practice what you promote. Visualize yourself as the warm, enthusiastic, competent, dynamic leader you will be.
- Separate your own feelings, thinking, and beliefs about family dynamics, and communication style from those who will be attending.
- Be aware that you will set the tone for the meeting during the first three minutes.
- Remember that it is okay to have fun while you facilitate.

During the seminar. Here are some tips for conducting a successful program:

Be sure to wait long enough for someone to answer when you ask a question. Make clear eye contact with several people. Remember that if you answer your own questions, others will not participate verbally.

- Don't be defensive if someone disagrees with you.
- Practice the ground rules yourself.

- Don't feel compelled to respond or add to everyone's remarks. It's appropriate to say "Thank you" and continue.
- Take the freedom to change the schedule if the energy level is down, if things are taking longer than you anticipated, or if it is obvious something needs to be addressed by the entire group.
- If an individual, or a few individuals, want to go further into discussing something, remember your responsibility to the entire group. Suggest to them that you would be pleased to dialogue with them after the meeting.

Seminar Preparation

Advertisements. Use posters, bulletin announcements, phone calls to families who have teens. A suggested advertising poster might list the following goals:

- To Celebrate the Family
- Build Parent-Teen Relationships
- Understand More of God's Love
- Build the Church
- Learn Positive Communication Skills
- Have Fun

Set up for the weekend. The following may serve as a check list of some of the major items needed for a successful seminar.

- Appropriate seating (tables will be needed for some activities)
- Podium or lectern (for leader's notes) Microphone (if needed)
- Welcome poster (a poster similar to that used for advertising, as described above, may be posted in the meeting room to remind participants of the seminar goals)
- Poster of ground rules (Contents are listed below; the poster is displayed as a continual reminder of the guidelines which govern the sessions)
- Name tags
- Paper flip chart
- Felt-tip pens
- Pens or pencils for everyone
- Masking tape (for hanging paper on walls)
- Words for songs (on overhead or in printed form)
- Kleenex
- Aspirin, other first aid items (depending on your location)
- Drinking water

Poster of ground rules. Suggestions are:

- Everyone participates
- Everyone has the right to pass
- All opinions and beliefs are honored
- Mutual respect
- Confidentiality

- Take care of your own needs
- No side conversations

Part I — The Family That Talks Together

Friday evening — 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

As Participants Arrive

- Display a poster welcoming participants. Also, have someone at the door to welcome them.
- Seat participants in family groups.
- Provide materials for nametags. Instruct participants to decorate their nametags or write on them one thing they enjoy doing.

Welcome

Welcome the group and share goals for the weekend. Suggestions are:

- To celebrate the family
- Build parent-teen relations
- Understand more of God's love
- Build the church
- Learn positive communication skills
- Have fun

Present Ground Rules

Present and post ground rules for the weekend. They should remain in view throughout the meetings. The following points are suggested to clarify ground rules:

- Every one participates in all of the exercises, at least mentally.
- Everyone has the right to pass. If anyone does not wish to share or do an activity, he/she has that right and that right will be honored. However, that person should directly say to the others, "I pass."
- Because we are individuals, there will be differing opinions, maybe differing beliefs. These reflect how we have made sense out of our life experiences so far. We may change our opinions when we get new information or have new experiences.
- The leader will respect the participants and invites participants to do the same. We can agree to disagree and hear each other without deciding that one person's beliefs are right and another's are wrong. When we disagree, we will not put down another's ideas, and we will not change our own to please someone else.
- Keeping a confidence is different from keeping a secret. There are no secrets about what we will be doing this weekend. However, it would be inappropriate for us to share another person's opinions, beliefs, or experiences with others who are not a part of this group.
- Taking care of your own needs means that if you aren't comfortable, find a more comfortable chair if you can; if you need a drink, get one; if you are cold, see if something can be done about the temperature or if someone can loan you a sweater, etc. It does not mean you will get up and leave the rest of your family because you don't want to participate in the activity.

- It is disrespectful to get into a side conversation when someone else is talking; this is not practicing mutual respect.

Song Service

- Select songs appropriate for the age group.
- Make the words available in printed form or on overhead transparencies.

Prayer

Introduction to the Program and Activity 1

What is a *family*? Nuclear? Blended? Extended? Single parent? Family of origin? Married? Single? Church family? School family? Whatever its makeup, *family* is one of the most important parts of our lives for it gives us identity and a sense of belonging. Someone has said, "A family is where, when you come home at night, they have to let you in." (Solicit definitions of *family* from participants.) Think about your own family. What are some things you know, without a doubt, that keeps your family together and growing? (Participants may share as a group.)

Researchers study what builds strong families. They say that one of the most important components of a strong family is good communication. The family that talks together, the family that listens to one another, is a healthier family.

In this television age, a family "art" that should be on the endangered list is oral tradition. Family stories and memories, passed from one generation to another, are an important part of one's heritage. (Leaders may want to share an oral tradition from personal experience.)

The point we need to consider is simply this! As families share together their experiences, memories, feelings, and needs, they build bridges to one another. Sharing the ways that God has led in the past is an important part of our faith development as well.

You will now have an opportunity to communicate with each other, first by completing the Family Fact Sheet and then sharing.

Activity 1

Family Fact Sheet. Each person should be given a piece of paper large enough to accommodate the answers to the following questions: (see sample at end of chapter)

1. Your full name (including middle and maiden names if appropriate)
2. A favorite place in my house as a child . . .
3. Three adjectives that describe me . . .
4. A fun family memory I have . . .
5. Something I know about my ancestors . . .
6. If I could go anywhere in the world it would be . . .
7. One of my first impressions of God or an early memory about God . . .

Directions: Each person will independently write his or her answers. After the group has been given five minutes or so to complete the task, instructions are for them to trade with one other person in their family. They are to read the other person's sheet; then they can ask TWO questions in relation to something they read. Everyone should eventually exchange with each of the members of the family. They are not to ask more than

two questions, and each person should accept the answers of the other person and not get into a side conversation. If only two family members are present, they can discuss their answers further, or the leader can suggest they join with another small family group after the initial sharing between the two of them.

Introduction to Activity 2

Family dilemmas? Family crises? Family concerns? These are all factors that can tie a family in "knots." (Brainstorm with the group about typical "knotty" problems a family may face; write ideas down on a flipchart or chalkboard.)

Activity 2

Knots. *Objective:* To untangle the "knot" created by six or more people without releasing clasped hands. *Directions:* Have at least six people form a circle; you may need two or more families to work together. Pressing together, each person reaches for two different hands of those across the circle. (*Note:* avoid grasping the hand of a person next to you). After everyone is linked-up, the object is to once again form a circle without unclasping their hands. Verbal communication is fine, and some groups may end up with two circles. Some groups may not be able to untangle their group in the time allowed. If so, that's okay. *Debriefing:* Discuss lessons that can be learned about how problems can be solved. Who became the natural leaders in the groups? Are these the leaders who are usually listened to in the family? What was it like to combine two families for this exercise? What kind of circumstances might tie two families in "knots" in real life?

Introduction to Activity 3

Consider your family heritage. What makes your family unique, besides the fact that you belong to it? What does your family stand for? What do you know about your family name, its origins, the blend of cultures and peoples that you share in common? One reason the children of Israel focused on their origins and past history is because it helped them respect God's calling and His leading. In some similar ways, we have been called and we are led. It's part of what makes each family unique. (Leader/s may want to share from their personal history; ask others to share about their family's name.)

For families of Scottish background, for example, you will know that major clans had a tartan and an emblem. In medieval times men wore a coat-of-arms which identified them in an important way. In Hebrew culture, first names were given to describe personal qualities. (Leaders may want to expand on coat-of-arms banner idea with some historical information.)

Perhaps today some of your cultural traditions related to your family's identity have dropped away. However, your family is a unit, it is special, and it stands for something. In this next exercise we will give you each an opportunity to create your own family banner or coat-of-arms.

Activity 3

Family Banners or Coat of Arms. *Objective:* To symbolize what really matters to you in your family. *Materials needed:* Large sheets of paper or poster board for each family; felt-tip markers; tape for hanging banners. You can draw a coat-of-arms or banner shape beforehand, or have each family draw their own. *Directions:* Each coat-of-arms or banner should be divided into six sections. Each person should have an opportunity to help with the drawing, using pictures, designs, symbols, or words in the appropriate sections.

The drawings don't need to look like artwork, and they don't have to make sense to anyone but the family who is making them. The sixth question should be completed in words.

Questions for banner or coat-of-arms:

1. What do you consider our family's greatest achievement?
2. What is one special thing we each admire about another family member?
3. What are three family activities we enjoy doing?
4. What are three family rituals or traditions that are meaningful to our family?
5. What is at least one thing our family should try to improve?
6. What is/can be our family motto? Write it in words.

Note: A sample with the six questions printed on it could be displayed at the front, or distributed. Families can decorate their banner or coat-of-arms as time allows. *Debriefing:* Invite families to hang the banners around the room. This idea is adapted from the book, *Helping Your Child Find Values to Live By* by Sidney B. Simon and Sally Wendkos Olds.

Closing

Family Prayer Circles. Invite each family to gather together in a circle and suggest that each member offer a sentence prayer.

Part II — The Family That Prays and Worships Together

Sabbath morning — 9:30 a.m.– 12:15 p.m.

Welcome and Prayer

Seminar leaders may wish to invite one of the participants or participant families to offer prayer.

Song Service or Special Musical Selection

Optional

Opening Remarks

Remind the group of the goals and ground rules determined in the previous meeting. Share your hopes and plans for the day. Reassure participants that the day's format, which will vary somewhat from the typical Sabbath School and Divine Worship, is a different but appropriate way to worship on Sabbath.

Introduction to Activity 4

We all agree that having family worship together is important. We are here to worship together this morning. But it is difficult for many families to have worship at home on a regular basis because of busy schedules, lack of time, lack of commitment. Some find it difficult to keep worship interesting and relevant.

Note to leaders. In the Valuegenesis Study of 12,000 youth from Adventist homes in the North American Division, it was found that there is a high positive correlation between family worship and such variables as a warm family climate, Adventism as a life goal, overall endorsement of church standards, church attendance, denominational loyalty, vertical faith, frequency of personal prayer, tithing, and intention to remain an Adventist at age 40. A suggested resource for further comments about worship is *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance* by Roger L. Dudley and V. Bailey Gillespie.

We will have an opportunity now to participate in an exercise similar to one a family could do at home in a family worship. We will discuss the story of Jesus stilling the storm at sea (Mark 4:37- 41) in a relational way and focus on how people deal with "storms" and stressors.

Activity 4

The Storm at Sea. *Objective:* In light of the account in Mark 4:37-41, discuss in a relational way how people deal with "storms" and stressors. *Directions:* After dividing the family groups into circles, the leader reads verse 37 and describes how the storm might have been. Each family group is then asked to discuss how it would have been for them if they had been in the boat, based on how they typically respond to stress or crises. Care should be taken to allow each person to respond or not as they wish, without interruption. In each family group, the person whose birthday is nearest to the seminar date may be designated as group leader. After allowing time for discussion, the seminar leader will ask for a response from each group leader. Then the leader reads verses 38-41. *Debriefing:* What are some of the stressors or crisis issues that a family may face? What has this exercise illustrated about your family? What has it illustrated about the best way to handle family crises and family stress?

Activity 5

Family Gifts to the Group. Each family is invited to work together as a group to choose a creative way to present a meaningful scripture or song. Families should be given 20-25 minutes preparation and practice time. The groups should choose one person in the family to introduce their "gift." *Note:* It is hoped that each family will join in this exercise. Even small families should be encouraged to participate; it is suggested that people not combine themselves into larger groups.

Closing Prayer and Blessing on the Meal

Note to leaders regarding the noon meal. A potluck meal on the premises is suggested. Arrangements should be made for individuals other than participants to handle meal preparations, so that no one is taken away from the family group during worship.

Part III — The Family That Works Together

Sabbath afternoon — 2:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Introduction to Activity 6

What is the task of the family? To keep the children out of trouble? To make sure the bills are paid? To make a good impression? Some families consider these things to be their job. We believe the real function of the family is to be able to help its members to communicate, to be able to handle conflict, and to be committed to growth in all areas, forever . . . from here to eternity. That implies an ability to assess family strengths, to sort out roles and abilities. There was a popular poster a few years ago that said, "If you don't know where you are going, you won't know when you get there." Now let's spend some time to see where we are and where we want to go.

Activity 6

Family Report Card. *Objective:* Researchers have found that strong families have similar characteristics. In our next exercise you will have an opportunity to see what those characteristics are and

respond to how you would rate your family. *Directions:* Distribute and administer the **Family Report Card** (see handout at end of this chapter) which has been duplicated, one for each participant. Read the instructions: "For each topic, circle the number that represents where your family is on the scale. Record that score in the box to the right of each scale. Add all of the boxes to get your total score." Then direct them to the end of the exercise where it says: **If you scored: . . .**

(NOTE: Permission has been granted from Family Service America, Inc. to photocopy and use the **Family Report Card**, provided credit is given to FSA and no changes are made. No additions or deletions should be made, but permission is granted to imprint the name of the church or agency in the blank area on the last page.)

Break

Introduction to Activity 7

We often assume that if someone loves us, they will know what we need without our telling them. There's a normal pull during the teen years to separate. What we need to do is learn to separate and give freedom in ways that are healthy. This is one of the important tasks of the family.

We will spend some time hearing from you, teens, what it is that you need from your parents and what you appreciate in them. Parents, we want to hear from you about what it is you need from your teens and what you appreciate in them.

Activity 7

Family Needs Assessment. *Objective:* To discuss how needs can be met and how appreciation can be expressed in families. *Directions:* Divide the group, with parents in one group and teens in another. If possible, have them in different rooms. Using a blackboard or writing on poster paper, have both parents and teens make separate lists, each referring to the other group, with the leader writing down their responses to the following:

1. What we need from our parents/teens
2. What we appreciate about our parents/teens

(Some NEEDS of teens may be: to be more a part of family decisions that affect me, not have to share everything with my sister or brother, be trusted, wish my parents would stay home and be with us more often. NEEDS of parents might be: teens pick up their things, help more with family chores, listen, be more open with us, not be suspicious that we don't trust them when we ask them where they are going, do more things with the family.) *Debriefing:* When the lists are compiled from the two groups, get the groups back together and go over the appreciation list from parents first, then appreciation list from teens, then the needs lists. Then the leader should facilitate discussion (generally there is more in common between the groups than either expect) and discuss how needs can be met and how appreciation can be expressed in families. Encourage the family members to talk about their reactions to what was expressed in the next activity, "Walk and Talk."

Activity 8

Walk and Talk. Instruct each family to go on a walk and encourage them to talk about the previous activities. Each family should bring back one thing with them from the walk that symbolizes either what they have learned, what they have decided, what they need, or a new commitment they have made. Upon returning, each family chooses one member to share the symbol and its meaning.

Notes of Appreciation (Optional activity): *Objective:* Express appreciation for each family member in a specific and tangible way. *Materials needed:* Special notepaper, enough for each individual to write to each family member. *Directions:* Invite participants to write a short note of appreciation to each other family member. In this note they should be specific about things they appreciate about this person. After the allotted time, have family members "deliver their mail."

Introduction to Activity 9

Another work of the family is building a home. The symbol for the 1994 International Year of the Family pictured a heart within a house. That's a good illustration of what a home really is. It provides a shelter physically, emotionally, and spiritually. To illustrate the importance of a shelter to the family, and the impact communication has on how our family shelter stands, we will introduce you to the next activity.

Activity 9

Shelter Game. *Objective:* Each family is to construct a free-standing shelter, large enough for all family members to fit under, using only newspapers and masking tape. *Materials needed:* A large quantity of newspapers; masking tape. *Directions:* After gathering materials, each family is given five 10" [25 cm.] strips of masking tape. Families must spend at least three minutes planning and communicating about how they will build their shelter. They may not begin until the time is given to begin building. Once they begin construction, all verbal communication must cease. When the shelter is completed, they are to all "find shelter" and let the leader know they are done with their task. *Debriefing:* Discuss lessons learned about listening, about delegation of responsibilities and duties. Discuss the "shelter" concept. How can a family provide shelter, be a shelter? Have families discuss what they discovered or learned during this process.

Evening Meal

Part IV — The Family That Plays Together

Saturday evening — 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Introduction to Activity 10

We've discussed many things this weekend. However, the most important thing is that each family is unique and special in the eyes of God. That is worth celebrating. You will now have an opportunity to illustrate who you are and what you like, some of your values and goals, by making a family collage.

Activity 10

Family Collage. *Objective:* To allow each family to express creatively their personalities, their interests, their values, and goals. *Materials needed:* Provide each family with one sheet of poster board, at least one pair of scissors, glue, and a quantity of magazines.

Directions: Family members are to browse through the supplied magazines, collecting words and pictures that relate to them. These are to be glued to the poster board in a manner which they decide upon as a family. The ground rules apply: everyone in the family is to have opportunity to participate; the exercise should not be dominated by one to the exclusion of the others.

Debriefing: Each family group chooses a person to explain the meaning of their family collage to the entire group. To conserve time, the seminar leader can use the "burning matchstick method." For each family, a wooden match is lit; as long as the match burns, the designated family member can explain his or her family's collage. When the match is used up—the time is used up! The collection of collages can be displayed in the meeting room and taken home at the close of the evening.

Closing

Suggestions:

- Invite participants to share something they have learned.
- Review goals and discuss whether or not goals have been met. Encourage families to continue reading, studying, and communicating in order to grow closer to each other.
- Form a circle and sing, "Side by Side We Stand" or "The Family of God."

Let's remember that the family that talks together, prays together, works together, and plays together is the family that stays together. Let's keep working on it!

References

- Clarke, J. I. (1984). *Who me, lead a group?* Winston Press, Inc.
- Dudley, R., & Gillespie, V. B. (1992). *Valuegenesis: Faith in the balance.* Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press.
- Simon, S. B., & Olds, S. W. (1977). *Helping your child find values to live.* Values Press.

Family Fact Sheet

<p>A favorite place in my house as a child . . .</p>	<p>MY FULL NAME</p>	<p>If I could go anywhere in the world it would be . . .</p>
<p>Some things I know about my ancestors . . .</p>		<p>One of my first impressions of God or an early memory of God . . .</p>
	<p>Three adjectives that describe me . . .</p>	<p>A fun family memory I have is . . .</p>

Family Report Card

Instructions: For each topic, circle the number that represents where your family is on the scale. Record that score in the box to the right of each scale. Add all of the boxes to get your total score.

Communication: Researchers characterize the communication patterns of strong families as clear, open, and frequent. Rate your family's communication skills.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members keep thoughts and opinions to themselves.

Family members are always open and honest with each other.

Score

Encouragement of Individuals: Strong families appreciate the uniqueness of each family member and at the same time cultivate a sense of belonging to the family. Rate your family's encouragement of one another.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members don't support and encourage each other.

Family members strive to develop a supportive family environment.

Score

Commitment to Family: Each family member is supported and sustained by other family members and is committed to the family as a unit. Rate your family's commitment

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members don't give each other a lot of positive reinforcement.

Family members see themselves as a team.

Score

Spiritual Orientation: Strong families are guided by an underlying moral or value system shared by all members. Rate your family's spiritual orientation.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members don't discuss or share spiritual thoughts with each other.

Family members see themselves as sharing a strong spiritual life.

Score

Social Connectedness: Successful families are not isolated; they are connected to the wider society. Rate your family's involvement in the community.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members are isolated from the community.

Family members contribute to the community and can turn to friends, family, neighbors, & community resources during crisis.

Score

Ability to Adapt: Successful families are able to adapt to stressful and potentially damaging events and predictable life cycle or stage changes. Rate your family's ability to adapt.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members become dysfunctional during times of stress.

Family members have modes of adaptation that are structured or flexible when under stress

Score

Expressing Appreciation: Strong families appreciate the uniqueness of each family member while cultivating a sense of belonging to the family. Rate your family's appreciation of each other.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members don't offer each other recognition and respect.

Family members appreciate each other and express these feelings openly.

Score

The family report card is continued on the back of this sheet.

Clear Roles: Within healthy families, there is a clear recognition that the parents are in charge, yet open to the children's ideas. Rate your family's roles.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members see parents as unyielding authoritarian figures.

Family members know their responsibilities to the family and their roles within it.

Score

Time Together: Healthy families like to spend their free time together. Rate your family's togetherness.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Family members don't spend their free time with each other.

Family members spend ample quality time with each other.

Score

Give Yourself Ten Points for taking the time to complete this report card with your family.

Score

Tally your score and record the total here.

Total Score

If you scored:

0 - 25 points

Your score is low, but you can improve it. Contact your local FSA agency for suggestions & assistance.

26 - 50 points

Good start. Your local FSA agency has suggestions on how to strengthen your family.

51 - 75 points

Your score is good. If you want to improve it, contact the FSA agency in your community.

76 -100 points

Great Score! Keep up the good work!

Family Service America, Inc.
11700 West Lake Park Drive
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53224

For the Family Service America agency nearest you, call 1-800-221-2681.

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How Does Your Family Rate?

Use Family Service America's Report Card to Find Out

How strong is your family life? Does your family function well in today's fast-paced world? Do your family members work together to solve problems? Use this simple quiz to evaluate your family. You might be surprised at the results. After taking this short test, feel free to contact Family Service America at 1-800-221-2681 for more information.

A Prescription for Optimum Health

by Kathleen H. Liwidjaja-Kuntaraf, MD, MPH
Director, Health-Temperance, Asia Pacific Division

Theme

This seminar presents the eight laws of health and suggests how families can be more in harmony with them.

Setting

The program is designed to be used in a variety of ways. The material is suitable for family camp, for a Sabbath afternoon presentation, a Family Enrichment Seminar, or other uses.

Format

The following material is presented as a fairly complete outline from which leaders may select material or add their own additional material and illustrations.

Handouts

There are a number of handouts as follows: Useful Emergency Items Found in the Home, and Supplies to Have at Hand for an Emergency. They can be duplicated and distributed to the participants for take home use. During the program the Family Health Questionnaire and the quiz on Immediate First Aid can be used to generate interest in the afternoon topic. Answers to these surveys are enclosed for the benefit of the leader.

Introduction

The *British Medical Journal* once reported an unusual case of the rare and bizarre *de Clerambault's syndrome* in which a 36-year-old unmarried woman clerk had a very strong delusion that her director was in love with her. She personally had never spoken to her boss, a married man, but had written fourteen love letters.

When further examined, it was found that this lady had been suffering from Grave's Disease for the past five years (Grave's Disease is a disease in which there is excessive production of the thyroid hormone). It was the untreated hyperthyroidism that caused her imbalanced hormonal state, creating a systematized delusion that her director was in love with her.

De Clerambault's syndrome is a condition in which a patient has the delusion of being loved by someone, usually of higher status. It is certainly a unique example of the risk a patient has to face if he/she chooses not to comply with the prescription given by the doctor.

God has also given us the divine prescription for optimum health. Are we showing the same noncompliance with God's divine prescription as this lady showed in not being treated for the so-called *de Clerambault Syndrome*?

God's Plan for Holistic Health

When God created Adam and Eve, their health was in a perfect state.

As Adam came forth from the hands of his Creator, . . . He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth . . . he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry . . . and well proportion. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulder . . . She too was noble, perfect in symmetry and very beautiful (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 43).

Adam's vital force was twenty times as much as the vital force of what a man has now. In *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 138, 139, it is stated, "If Adam at his creation, had not been endowed with twenty times as much vital force as men now have, the race with their present habits of living in violation of natural law, would have become extinct."

God really longs for each one of us to return to the perfect health He had given to Adam and Eve back in Eden before the fall. The prescription for optimum health for us is found in *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 78, "Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies." To simplify remembering these eight natural remedies of the optimum health prescription, use the acronym, NEWSTART, which was developed at Weimar Institute.

N- Nutrition
E- Exercise
W- Water
S- Sunshine
T- Temperance
A- Air
R- Rest
T- Trust in God

This is not a list of things from which we can choose, but a *total packaged* prescription. We need to comply with all the eight remedies prescribed in order to acquire total health.

Nutrition

The first item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is nutrition. We all realize when God created Adam and Eve; He gave the exact instruction of what they were to eat. Genesis 1:29 says, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."

Adam's diet of fruits, nuts, and grains was modified to include the whole plant after he was exiled from the Garden of Eden. "It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field" (Genesis 3:18).

However, a millennium later in Noah's time following the flood, a total destruction of all the vegetation, led God to permit the use of animals for food. God said, "Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything" (Genesis 9:3).

This specific permission has three accompanying qualifications that are often overlooked.

- The flesh was to be drained of blood (Genesis 9:4).
- Only "clean" animals were to be used as food (Genesis 7:2, Leviticus 11:1-28).
- No unnecessary killing of animals was to be done (Genesis 9:5).

The human body was created in such a way, with its specific body organs and functions, that any deviation from the laws of nature will have a disastrous effect on it.

Scientists long ago discovered the difference between herbivores (plant-eating animals) and carnivores (meat-eating animals). For example the:

Mouth. The human mouth has a small opening, whereas carnivorous animals such as the dog have a larger mouth opening which allows them to eat chunks of meat.

Dental structure. Humans have sharp cutting incisors with flat or nodular surfaced molars used for crushing and grinding foods just like the herbivorous animals. On the other hand, the carnivores have elongated, strong, and sharp canines for grasping and tearing flesh. The molars have sharp lateral edges in approximating jaws that are used for slicing flesh.

Motion of the jaw. Carnivores' jaw motion is singular—open and shut only. On the other hand, herbivorous animals have three distinct jaw motions—vertical, or up and down, lateral, or side ways, and forward or backward, just like a human.

Intestines. Carnivores have a simple stomach, relatively short small intestines, and a large intestine that is very short, straight, and smooth. On the other hand herbivores have a larger stomach capacity with the parts sometimes complicated, such as the multiple stomachs of cattle. The small intestine is very long and the large intestine is long and smooth. The human intestine has no carnivores features.

Perspiring route. Herbivores perspire through the skin just like the human beings, while the carnivorous animals perspire through the mouth.

Blood. The blood of herbivores and humans shows a lower alpha and beta lipo protein ratio. In the blood of carnivores, the ratio is higher.

Saliva. Human saliva contains the enzyme ptyalin, as does that of the herbivores, which is used for the digestion of starch. The saliva of carnivores cannot digest starch.

Drinking. Humans drink water by suction as do other herbivores, while all carnivorous animals lap the water with their tongues.

Bile salt. Human bile salt is like that of the herbivores and unlike that of the carnivores.

Since humans were designed not to eat meat, no wonder there are many diseases that resulted from meat eating.

The testimony of health experts. I once attended Dr. Nathan Pritikin's seminar in California, and I was very surprised to hear him saying from the platform: "If you only follow the instruction in this book, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, written by Ellen G. White, you will indeed be healthy." I almost couldn't believe what I had heard with my own ears! Here is a non-Adventist lecturer, who has written many books, promoting Mrs. White's book to a group of about 2000 people attending his seminar. How grateful we are that Mrs. White warned us 130 years ago as to the types of food that are injurious to our bodies. Medical science is now discovering more and more of the truth of her advice.

Rita Butram, Ph.D., Chief of the Diet and Cancer Branch at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), USA, said that 35-49% of all cancer deaths are diet related. She further said that the NCI has set the year 2000 for achieving the goal of reducing cancer deaths by 50 percent. According to Dr. Butram, this goal is feasible if people follow the NCI recommendation to:

- Reduce fat intake to 30% of total calories
- Increase dietary fiber to 20-30 gm daily, with an upper limit of 35 gm
- Maintain optimum body weight
- Consume more fruits and vegetables.

It sounds very much like Mrs. White's advice. Dr. Butram continued by saying that 150,000 lives could be saved annually by following the National Cancer Institute recommendations.

- Colon cancer could be cut by 50%
- Breast cancer decreased by 25%
- Prostate, endometrial, and gall bladder cancer decreased by 15%

Noncompliance with this first *natural remedy* prescription certainly brings risks to our lives.

Exercise

The second item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is exercise. You have heard time and again about the importance of exercise. There are many advantages of regular exercise. If we try to gather all the benefits of exercise we would come up with a list of 30 advantages to exercise, which include:

- A healthy and efficient heart.
- Healthy circulation.
- Normalizing of the blood pressure Chigh blood pressure will be reduced and low blood pressure could be raised.
- Healthy bones.
- Improved immunity by increasing the circulating white blood cells (WBC), primarily the lymphocytes and polymorphonuclear (PMN), stimulating the beta endorphin production from the brain, which increases the natural killer (NK) cell activity against tumor cells. One pico gram (one trillionth of a gram) of beta endorphin increases the NK cell activity against tumor cells by 42 percent.
- More efficient lungs because exercise stimulates deep breathing.
- Decrease in negative emotions, so you feel more comfortable with yourself, due to less anger and frustration.
- Aids digestion and promotes intestinal activities, decreasing gas and constipation.
- Strengthens the muscles, bones, and connective tissues.
- Sharpens the intellect of the brain making it function better. Students will find that they will be more efficient in their studies and will be able to learn material much faster.
- Healthier skin and complexion.
- Increases energy level because exercise produces more energy than the amount utilized so you do not get tired as easily and will feel much better.
- Decreases the aging process.
- Helps you to sleep better at night.

The question that comes into mind is, "What type of exercise is considered *to be healthy*?"

Aerobic exercise. While there are various types of exercise from which the body can benefit, the type emphasized here will be the aerobic exercise because it has the *aerobic benefit*. It is the type of exercise that improves the performance of the cardiovascular system's ability and efficiency in the transport of oxygen to the cells of the body. The benefit is seen in longevity and good health.

We need to do aerobic exercises 3-5 times per week, not too much and not too little. One schedule could be:

- Five minutes of warming up, performing your chosen exercise at a low intensity for the first few minutes so that your pulse rate can be slowly elevated to the aerobic benefit level; then followed by easy stretching exercises that will help maintain joint flexibility and prevent muscle soreness.
- Continue with 30 minutes of brisk walking to increase your pulse to the training heart rate.
- End with 5 minutes of cooling-down exercises to decrease pulse rate slowly and safely.

If after the 30 minutes of brisk walking, your pulse is between 120 to 150 per minute, it is sufficient to give you the "aerobic" benefit. You will have improved cardiovascular efficiency in the transport of oxygen to the cells of the body. That means you will feel good.

Walking. Mrs. White had advice for us 130 years ago she wrote, "There is no exercise that can take the place of walking. By it circulation of the blood is improved" (*Counsels on Health*, p. 200). Brisk walking can be done any time and any place. It is inexpensive, requires no special equipment, and has minimal injuries. It calls into action most of the muscles and systems of the body. It is relaxing, and analysis shows that humans are designed to walk.

Some people take this exercise prescription to the extreme and jog for two hours or even more. Dr. Lynn Fitzgerald, an immunologist at London's St George Hospital who is also the world's 200 km woman champion, tested the blood of runners after a 100 km race and discovered their level of antibodies was low. Substantially lower than before the race. It appears that the T cells (antibodies) are suppressed by high adrenaline and corticosteroid (stress hormone) levels, produced by excessive training. Therefore, it is important to be temperate, even in the matter of exercising. While moderate exercise boosts the immune system, too much exercise is detrimental to the body.

Water

The third item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is water. We are advised to drink six to eight glasses of water a day as our body cannot be cleansed with only one or two. The cells in our blood need to take a bath with water and not with soft drinks or juices. A very practical guide to water drinking is to consume enough through out the day so that the urine passed is clear or a very faint yellow color.

I remember when a colleague of mine left his six-year-old daughter at home with a babysitter. Having learned that water is good for the body, the baby sitter asked the child to drink 10 glasses of water that day. When my colleague returned home he noticed his daughter was confused and lethargic. She was brought to the hospital immediately, only to discover she was suffering from dilutional hyponatremia (a decrease of serum sodium concentration due to water intake in excess of output). So again the principle of temperance is needed, even in the matter of drinking water.

Hydrotherapy. We also know the importance of the external use of water as you give hydrotherapy to the needed areas of the body. It is better than taking medicines that have so many side effects.

A friend of mine shared this experience with me. Her father injured his elbow during a badminton game. She immediately told her father to compress the hematoma (black and blue) elbow with ice, but unfortunately he would not listen to her. The next day the black and blue area around the elbow grew so much larger that he felt scared and went to see a doctor. The doctor asked: "What happened?" "I played badminton last night and got knocked down, but the black and blue seems to be much larger this morning. I am so afraid!" The doctor's advice was to go home and use ice compress, and he charged US\$100 for the consultation fee!

Mrs. White long ago explained the importance of using hydrotherapy in her book, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 156.

The external application of water is one of the easiest and most satisfactory ways of regulating the circulation of the blood. . . . But many have never learned by experience the beneficial effects of the proper use of water. . . . All should become intelligent in its use in simple home treatments.

If only my friend's father has believed in his daughter's suggestion based on Mrs. White's teaching, he would not have spent US\$100 unnecessarily.

Sunshine

The fourth item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is sunshine. Some of the advantages of sunshine are:

- lower blood cholesterol
- lower blood sugar
- increase in aerobic fitness
- building and repairing bones
- increase of white blood cells, which are used to fight disease
- a decrease of the melatonin level, a bodily chemical that is prevalent in people experiencing depression
- it serves as a disinfectant.

A scientist once did an experiment using a petri dish with bacteria growth on it. One half of the dish was covered and the other half was exposed to direct sunlight. The covered part of the dish was swarming with bacteria, but nothing grew on the half exposed to sunlight. All the bacteria had been killed.

This experiment has tremendous implications for every home. It is a healthful practice to open wide our curtains and windows to allow the sunlight to enter our rooms. Over a period of time, this sunlight will destroy the bacteria lurking in the dust on the window sill and floor. Mrs. White said in *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 179:

In the building of houses, it is especially important to secure thorough ventilation and plenty of sunlight. Let there be a current of air and an abundance of light in every room in the house. . . . No room is fit to be occupied as a sleeping room unless it can be thrown open daily to the air and sunshine.

However, a word of caution is needed. Sunlight can also be harmful. Prolonged exposure:

- causes skin to burn
- increases the risk of skin cancer
- speeds up the aging process
- can damage the eyes
- can cause cataracts.

So again, the principal of temperance is applicable here.

Temperance

The fifth item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is temperance. This is a very important natural remedy in the prescription. "True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562).

Many people think temperance only applies to avoiding the use of tobacco, tea, coffee, alcohol and drugs. But the avoidance of harmful chemicals is only part of temperance. True temperance involves moderation in every aspect of life. We are advised to use judiciously even the good things.

I remember studies done in Egypt that showed that lack of iron causes anemia, which affects the learning and problem-solving capacity of school-age children. However, those anemic children who scored less than the non-anemic, improved on treatment which involved taking iron tablets.

However, study done in the Solomon Islands and Taiwan shows that excessive use of iron will result in hemochromatosis, a disease in which the liver has high iron storage. This is related to a risk of acquiring hepatoma, a liver cancer. Therefore, even a good mineral—if not taken temperately—can be detrimental to the body. Temperance truly involves moderation in every aspect of life, which includes eating, drinking, sleeping, exercising, seeing, working, earning money, etc.

Air

The sixth item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is air. People cannot live without oxygen even for a few minutes. Oxygen, taken from the air as we breathe, is needed by each cell to perform its functions.

I remember the shocking news that I heard while vacationing in Indonesia. My brother-in-law's acquaintance was robbed and since his wife was the only person at home, she could only scream. The robbers panicked and, seeing a bucket of water, quickly plunged her head in that bucket for more than five minutes causing her death. Such a sweet lady, dead because of no oxygen supply. People cannot live longer than a few minutes without air.

Pure, clean, fresh air is the ideal quality of air one should seek to breathe. However, it is unfortunate that our air is polluted by the vast numbers of automobiles, trucks, airplanes, internal combustion engines, heavy industries, soft cheap coal, or sulfur fuel power plants.

Where can we find quality air? The most healthful air comes from locations by the trees or green plants or by the ocean. Formerly it was thought that good air is merely clean, diluted oxygen. Now it is becoming more and more obvious that fresh air must contain electrified oxygen produced by trees or vegetation floating in the ocean. It is estimated that the algae in the ocean provide almost 90 percent of the oxygen in our atmosphere, with the rest coming from plants on land.

We feel exhilarated when coming near a waterfall or by the ocean. In the mountains, where an abundance of negatively ionized air is present, resorts and vacation areas flourish. Therefore, efforts need to be made to breathe the natural electrified air, for example do our morning exercise in the outdoors, thus imparting a vitality to the blood and the nervous system.

However, a word of caution is needed. While we realize breathing is very important to our bodies, on the other hand, hyperventilation (excessive breathing) will cause reduction in the blood's carbon dioxide. The severe alkalosis produced (blood become alkaline) will consequently produce dizziness, tetany with carpopedal spasm (contractions of distal muscles, particularly in the hand). Again, the temperance principle is applicable, even in breathing fresh air.

Rest

The seventh item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is rest. In one day a human heart beats 100,000 times, pushing blood through 17 million miles of arteries, veins and capillaries. We speak about

4,000 words, breathe 20,000 times, move major muscles 750 times, and operate 14 billion brain cells. No wonder rest is a very important element in acquiring optimum health.

The need for sleep is highly personal, and it is not known why. It does not match one's sex, intelligence, or the amount of exercise one gets. But it is evident everyone needs some sleep. A newborn baby sleeps an "average" 20 hours a day; a 6-year-old, 10 hours; a 12-year-old, 9 hours; an adult, 7 hours, and 20 minutes. But there are wide variations around these figures.

Sleep experts have devised this rule of thumb: Your sleep need is being met if you are not sleepy during the day and are fully alert with a sense of well-being.

Many hormones are being produced when we are sleeping including:

- *Growth hormones*
- Important for growth, enables nerve cells to make learning permanent and useful. Growth hormones are most produced during deep, peaceful *pre-midnight* sleep.
- *Cortisol hormones*
Plays a large role in helping us deal with the stressors of each day; reduces inflammation and fatigue. Peak production time is from midnight to early morning.

Thus when we go to bed late, we hurt ourselves by limiting the body's ability to repair the wear and tear of today and lessen the energy and vitality of tomorrow.

Sleep is certainly an important aspect of rest. It is a great restorer. It restores the cells of your muscles, including your heart, your kidneys, bone marrow, stomach, and brain. If you sprain an ankle, cut yourself, or break a bone, it will heal faster when you get extra sleep. Sleep prepares you for greater speed, accuracy, and efficiency, both physically and mentally. It sweeps away fatigue and is one of nature's most effective brain fresheners. As a person sleeps, the skin cells divide and make new cells twice as fast as when a person is awake. That's the reason sleep is one of the important factors in helping people look young. However, too much sleep is detrimental to our bodies.

An article in the *American Journal of Public Health* reported a study involving 1,064,004 men and women. This study compared deaths with the number of hours slept each night. The lowest death rate was in those men averaging around seven hours of sleep per night. However, those that skimped on their sleep or spent too much time in bed, died at a younger age than those who got the proper amount of sleep on a regular basis. So again, the temperance principle is applicable in sleeping as well. Six to seven hours of uninterrupted sleep prolongs life, but too little or too much sleep shortens life.

Trust in God

The eighth item of the packaged prescription for optimum health is trust in the Lord. This is an important "natural remedy" prescription. People face many difficulties, problems, and pain—emotional and physical. The success of people depends on how they handle the pain and difficulty.

Commonly used methods of handling pain and problems that yield poor results are:

- "head in the sand" — pretending it isn't there
- bitter resistance, anger, resentment
- avoidance techniques: seeking comfort in drugs, alcohol, fiction, flight, and food.

A more productive way of handling pain and problems that yields excellent results is to accept the fact that pain and problems are normal and common to the entire human race. Accepting that fact, one can then take responsibility for wise, reasonable, and workable solutions.

Once we are mature enough and responsible enough to accept the fact that problems and pain are normal in this world, life is no longer difficult. However, if refusal to accept life's pain continues long enough, emotional illness can be expected—often followed by physical illness. The problem faced will not be an *eustress* (normal stress) but a *distress*, causing human beings to suffer from various psychosomatic diseases all the way to psychiatric disorders.

Hence, it is important for us to know how to handle the problems we face without experiencing too much stress. Being cheerful and happy doesn't mean people don't have pain and problems. It means they realize that pain and the problems that pain brings are necessary for mental and spiritual growth. Far from grumbling about these painful situations and events, we ought to be thankful for them.

Even the righteous have troubles. However, when they recognize their plight and deep need for divine help, they pray and God comes to their aid. This dependency on God encourages their growth as well as happiness and joy. Furthermore, every time you responsibly work out correct solutions to the problems faced, you are enhancing your mental health and strength. "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty" (Job 5:17).

One of the reasons it is good to remind us to accept life's pain and problems graciously is based on the text in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." God loves us and values us immensely. Therefore, it is for our benefit that we trust the Lord as we deal responsibly with pain and problems. Isaiah 26:4, "Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal."

For if we fully trust in Him, the results will be as stated in Isaiah 26:3: "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."

Yes, if we trust in God, we will experience a perfect peace. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 203, states that:

Trouble and turmoil may surround us, yet we enjoy a calmness and peace of mind of which the world knows nothing. This inward peace is reflected in a . . . vigorous, glowing experience that stimulates all with whom we come in contact. The peace of the Christian depends not upon peaceful conditions in the world about him but upon the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

Yes, trusting God means experiencing a peace of mind of which the world knows nothing. I recall some poetic lines that have been penned about trust that I would like to share with you:

Trust in yourself, and you are doomed to disappointment;
Trust in your friends, and they will die and leave you;
Trust in money, and you may have it taken from you;
Trust in reputation, and some slanderous tongue may blast it;
BUT — TRUST IN GOD, and you are never to be confounded in time or eternity.

Conclusion

As we take all of these eight natural remedies prescribed to make one complete package, through the strength of God, we will not only make our bodies healthier, which will prolong our lives, but our nerves will be greatly strengthened too. "Firm quiet nerves and a healthy circulation help man to follow right principles and to listen to the promptings of conscience" (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 298).

It is only when we have healthy nerves that God can communicate with us freely, making it possible for us to develop the Christlike character that makes us fit for heaven. May we continue to receive His strength

to comply with the divine packaged prescription. Thus we can obtain and enjoy optimum health, the favorable environment for developing a Christlike character that will make us fit for eternal life.

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Useful Emergency Items Found in the Home

Should an emergency occur in your home, certain items can be useful. The following list provides an example of some items and how they can be used:

1. **Diapers:** A source of padding for splints or compress for severe bleeding
2. **Towels, linens:** as a compress to control severe bleeding; as padding for splints; as bandages
3. **Safety pins:** to fasten bandages
4. **Magazines and newspapers:** to act as splints for fractures
5. **Blankets:** to keep a person warm
6. **Old door or board:** to act as a support for injury to head, neck, or back. May be used for transportation.
7. **Large handkerchief or scarf:** to act as a sling or eye bandage
8. **Electric fan:** to reduce temperature of heat stroke victim

From, *The New Lexicon First Aid and Family Emergency Handbook*, Lexicon Publications, New York, 1987.

Supplies to Have at Hand for an Emergency

It is a good idea to keep these items together in a container and in a place where you can quickly secure the items when needed. These supplies should be periodically checked and replaced as necessary.

1. Gauze bandages - Wrap gauze bandage around injured leg or arm.
2. Band-aids - Apply to small wound after cleaning it.
3. Butterfly bandages - Use on small lacerations/cuts or abrasions. In some instances can replace stitches.
4. Gauze pads, sterilized and sealed separately - Sealed packages insure pads sterility, and helps prevent infection; use to cover open wounds.
5. One inch (2.5 cm.) adhesive tape - To hold ends of bandage. Some people have sensitivity when applied to skin.
6. Elastic bandage for wrapping sprained limbs, 3 inch (7.5 cm.) - Helps prevent swelling, gives support. Do not wrap too tight; it can cause circulation problems.
7. Scissors - Scissors are used in cutting bandages or to remove clothing to treat some injuries.
8. Cotton tipped swabs - Swabs are used to clean some wounds. Do NOT use to clean ears.
9. Regular strength aspirin for adults - Take for minor pain or headache. Do not use if bleeding disorder exists, after surgery, or when person has ulcers. Children under 12 years should use non-aspirin treatment.
10. Thermometer - To measure fever. Take temperature 15-20 minutes after eating or drinking. Normal temperature is 98.6 F or 37E C.
11. Syrup of Ipecac - to induce vomiting in case of food poisoning or pill overdose. Do NOT use if person has swallowed acid or bleach (any substance that would re-injure coming up through the digestive tract)— give patient milk to drink.
12. Safety pins for bandages - To keep bandages or sling in place.
13. Tweezers - To remove splinters or thorns from the skin.
14. 3% Hydrogen Peroxide - Use for wound cleansing, etc.
15. Bar of soap - Soap and water make a good cleansing agent. Many bacteria present on skin can be washed away.
16. Calamine lotion - Apply to skin to relieve itching and redness due to insect bite, poison ivy, etc.
17. Flashlight - To examine mouth, ears, eyes, etc.
18. Absorbent cotton - Use with alcohol to clean skin. Do not use on the wound, cotton fuzz often sticks.
19. Snake bite kit - Very useful in area where poisonous snakes are present.

Family Health Questionnaire

1.
 - a. What is normal body temperature? _____
 - b. How do you measure body temperature? _____
 - c. If someone in your family has a fever, what can you do to help lower body temperature? _____

2.
 - a. What is the normal pulse rate for adults? _____ Children _____ Babies _____
 - b. How do you measure the pulse rate? _____
 - c. How do you determine your training heart rate? _____

3.
 - a. What is normal blood pressure? _____
 - b. What does this figure mean? _____
 - c. What are some causes of low blood pressure? _____
 - d. What are some causes of high blood pressure? _____

4.
 - a. What is normal eye pupil size? _____
 - b. What causes the pupil to dilate? _____
 - c. What causes pupils to constrict? _____

5.
 - a. What is normal cholesterol level? _____
 - b. What is cholesterol? _____
 - c. What are some causes of high cholesterol? _____

6. What is your?
 - a. Resting pulse rate _____
 - b. Blood pressure _____
 - c. Cholesterol level _____

Immediate First Aid

What immediate first aid measures would you take for the following situations?

1. Burns:
2. Severe bleeding:
3. Choking:
4. Unconsciousness:
5. Dehydration:
6. Snake bite:
7. Shock:
8. Drowning:

ANSWERS

"Family Health Questionnaire"

1.
 - a. 98.6 F and/or 37.1 C
 - b. Mercury thermometer (mouth and under arm least accurate; rectum most accurate)
 - c. Remove extra clothing unless having chills, sponge with cool water or put in tepid bath.

2.
 - a. Adult 68-72, child 80, baby 120-140
 - b. Feel carotid artery (neck) or radial pulse (wrist), and count for one minute.
 - c. $220 - \text{your age} \times .65 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ and $\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times .75 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$.
Example: If you are 35 years old: $220 - 35 = 185 \times .65 = 120$ and $185 \times .75 = 138$.
Training heart rate = between 120 and 138.
Always check with your physician before beginning an exercise program if you are over 40 years old or have any health problems.

3.
 - a. Adults 120/80 (tends to raise with age)
 - b. Upper number is pressure when heart beats; lower one is pressure when heart is resting.
 - c. Shock, illness, undernourishment, excess heat (Chronic-lower-than average BP is not a problem unless it comes on abruptly and causes dizziness and faintness.)
 - d. Sometimes no apparent reason, but often influenced by heredity and lifestyle. Can be caused by disease, e.g. kidney, hormone disorder.

4.
 - a. Varies with intensity to light
 - b. Low light
 - c. Bright light or head injury (brain damage)

5.
 - a. Less than 200 is ideal
 - b. A chemical present in certain foods, a small amount is necessary.
 - c. High fat diet, lack of exercise, stress, heredity can play a factor

ANSWERS

"Immediate First Aid"

1. Burns: Can reduce sensitivity by applying cold water or ice. Cover with sterile nonstick dressing to avoid infection. Do not put ice directly on skin, direct application can injure skin. Do not use grease or butter. Do not break blisters.
2. Severe bleeding: Lay victim down and if possible raise injured part. Apply pressure directly to wound. If bleeding is severe, apply direct pressure to arterial pressure points. Apply pressure to major artery at a point between wound and the heart where the artery can be compressed against a bone.
3. Choking: Usually occurs during eating. Meat most common cause. Ask, "Are you okay, are you choking?" Perform Heimlich Maneuver (abdominal thrusts). Repeat as necessary. If victim passes out, continue with victim lying on floor. Place a child face down across knee and give several thumps with heel of hand between shoulder blades (more gently than for adult). Hold baby upside down and thump with other hand.
4. Unconsciousness: Check for breathing and pulse. Call for help. Do CPR as necessary. (Danger of obstruction to airway from tongue.)
5. Dehydration: Results from not enough fluid intake or loss through heat, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. Drink extra fluids. Oral rehydration packs replace electrolyte loss. Children dehydrate more quickly than adults. If unable to take orally, may need intravenous replacement.
6. Snake bite: Important to know if snake is poisonous. If you don't know the type of snake, be able to describe it. In any snake bite, keep bitten area below victim's heart. Place tourniquet 2-4" above bite toward body. DO NOT CUT OFF CIRCULATION. Make 1/4 " (1/2cm) cut with sterile blade through each fang mark in direction of length of limb. Suck out venom, and spit it out. For a coral snake bite, immobilize victim and obtain help immediately
7. Shock: Lay person down, head low, face up, and elevate limbs. Loosen tight clothing. Cover with blanket or coat. Person in shock usually is pale, faint, sweating, has weak, rapid pulse and cold, moist skin. May be thirsty, drowsy, confused, and may become unconscious.
8. Drowning: Start mouth-to-mouth resuscitation immediately. Do not waste time trying to clear water from lungs. May need to blow hard, but air you breathe will pass through water. Continue respirations while moving victim. Do not stop until victim breathes regularly or until help arrives.

Effectively Functioning Families

by Karen and Ron Flowers

Introduction

In *Dancing With the Family* pioneer family therapist Carl Whitaker and co-author William Bumberry point out, “One of the difficulties in working with families lies in trying to determine what is healthy and what isn’t. How do we tell the difference between a family functioning in the ‘normal’ range and one mired in ‘pathology’?” (Whitaker & Bumberry, 1988, p. 197). Here Whitaker and Bumberry give “normal” a clinical definition, equating it with “healthy,” and see it as the opposite of “pathology.” They also use “range,” which is useful in viewing healthy family functioning not as a fixed absolute, but as occurring on a continuum or within broad confines.

“Healthy” was also the term Dolores Curran used in her research on *Traits of a Healthy Family* (Curran, 1983). Alan Gurman and David Kniskern add to “healthy” the term “well-functioning” as in “the healthy or well-functioning marriage or family” (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981, p. xv). H. A. Otto in 1963 equated “the so-called healthy or normal family” with “a strong family.” Quoting him and picking up the concept, David Olson and Hamilton McCubbin speak of marital and family “strengths” (Olson & McCubbin, 1983). Nick Stinnett had also this term in his research on *Building Family Strengths* (Stinnett, Chesser, & DeFrain, 1979).

Why an Understanding of Effective Family Functioning Is Important

Assumptions about what it means to function in an effective way lie at the foundation of work for families. Awareness of normal functioning affects those who work in family ministries in a practical way. Our understanding of normality affects our plans and programs for families—it shapes our planning, the way we conduct our programs and our measurement of the results.

A Christian Perspective on Healthy Family Functioning

From biblical revelation. Within the word of God, the divine ideals for family functioning are put in place at creation: a level of companionship and intimacy described as “one flesh,” “naked,” and “unashamed” (Gen. 2:24,25; Matt. 19:4-6; Eph. 5:31) is expected. Among other passages describing the divine intent for families, faithfulness to marriage and family covenants (Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14) is enjoined. Unconditional love (*agape*) is to mark the relationships of humans with one another (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:8; Matt. 22:37, 39).

Because of sin, humanity despairs of functioning at this ideal level. Jesus describes the human condition: “From within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly” (Mark 7:21-23). The apostle Paul adds a personal testimony, “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature” (Rom. 7:18).

Jesus Christ, however, through His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation to heaven ushers in a new humanity, a humanity consistent with the divine ideals. The believer accepts by faith this new redeemed human experience as a personal reality, of being crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), and of being resurrected to a new life in Him (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4-8). Forces external and internal to the believer may provoke relapses in thought or conduct (Gal. 5:16-18; 1 John 3:20), but trust in the spiritual resources which God has provided, continually draws an individual in the direction of the divine ideals, producing positive

attitudes and behaviors of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Rom. 8:5-7; Gal. 5:22, 23).

From a biblical perspective notions of optimal family functioning are modeled after the way God enters into and sustains relationships with humanity. Jack and Judith Balswick (1991) see at least four aspects: (1) commitment that is based on a mature (i.e. unconditional and bilateral) covenant; (2) an atmosphere of grace which embraces acceptance and forgiveness; (3) the use of family resources to empower rather than to control one another; and (4) intimacy based on a knowing that leads to caring, understanding, communication, and communion with other. They add:

Living in covenant love is a dynamic process. God has designed family relationships to grow to a maturity which is analogous to that of individual believers who attain the full measure of perfection found in Christ (Eph. 4:13). This maturing of relationships eventually enables family members to reach out to persons beyond the boundaries of the family. (p. 33)

From natural revelation. In addition to that which Scripture reveals in its family narratives, its metaphors of God as husband and father, its pithy wisdom, its propositional statements, and its direct instruction about family living, Christians see in nature and in scientific study of the natural processes of the human mind and relationships sources of truth about families, Arthur Holmes (1977) puts it well when he says that all truth is God's truth:

Whatever we understand about nature is ultimately about his [God's] creative wisdom and power; whatever we do in human art and science ultimately comes from the creative and rational potential that God invested in men by making us in his own image. (p. 12)

Though sin has wrought its damaging effects upon all that God created, it is evident both from such scriptures as Rom. 1:18-21 and from the accumulating body of research that there are still universal innate principles and laws implanted by the Creator govern the human mind and human interaction. An auto mechanics student can learn about automobiles by reading the manufacturer's manuals. It is possible also for the student to learn, even without a manual, by careful examination and investigation of the actual machinery. While we as Christians must continue to mine the Word more carefully regarding its perspectives on effective family functioning, we can learn invaluable lessons from the research and study that is being given to families themselves. Understood as part of natural revelation, this too belongs to a Christian perspective.

Research on Family Strengths

In our marriage enrichment seminars we routinely distribute a list of 25 or more possible agenda items which we call "Concerns." We ask couples to check their interests and, from these checked items, we make up our agenda for the program. Over a ten-year period we have found that, invariably, similar issues get selected: feeling valuable and special in the relationship; improving communication; handling anger and conflict; making time for each other; how to be separate, yet together; growing spiritually together.

During one workshop with more than 25 pastoral couples present, we asked the question, "If you had your wishes, what would you like for your marriage?" When "time for each other" or "time to be alone together" surfaced in the written responses, we were not surprised. What astounded us was that every woman's response included this same idea and so did most of the men's!

Another technique we use for discovery of what is effective family functioning is to use the story of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau in Genesis 27. We create a family sculpture of these four and have the actors read their lines from the Bible text. Then we ask the whole group what they thought we might learn from this family about what's effective and what's ineffective, even destructive, in family living. The story can be

counted on to show the importance of open communication, cooperation of the marital partners, effective ways of handling anger and conflict, appropriate differentiation of youth from parents, and other intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics. Such informal surveys, focusing as they do on what is lacking or areas where help is needed, point in the direction where effective family functioning lies.

This kind of anecdotal, informally-gathered information has been confirmed in formal studies by Nick Stinnett and Dolores Curran. Stinnett studied 130 Oklahoma families who had recommended by the Cooperative Extension Service and who rated themselves very high in terms of marital satisfaction and parent-child relationship satisfaction (Stinnett, Chesser & DeFrain, 1979). Six qualities of strong families were identified: (1) expression of appreciation for one another; (2) making time for each other and spending time together at mealtime, in recreation and work; (3) good communication patterns—talking and listening, sharing feelings, openly discussing conflict and working together on solutions; (4) deep level of commitment and strong interest in promoting each other’s happiness and welfare; (5) high degree of religious orientation—awareness of God or a higher power in their lives which gave them a sense of purpose, helped them be more patient with each other, more forgiving, quicker to get over anger, more positive and more supportive in their relationships; (6) ability to deal positively with crises.

Following this initial study, Stinnett surveyed 430 families with questionnaires in 1981 and revised the initial categories to five factors: love, religion, respect, communication, and individuality (Olson & McCubbin, 1983, p. 94).

The work of popular columnist and family life lecturer Dolores Curran (*Traits of a Healthy Family*, 1983) has become widely known amid the literature on family strengths. Curran surveyed 551 professionals who work with families—educators, pastors, family physicians, family counselors, and leaders of voluntary organizations, such as 4-H and Boy Scouts—about the traits commonly perceived by them in healthy families. Her respondents worked mainly with lower-middle-, middle-, and upper-middle-income families who live in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Most worked with Anglo-American families, although a significant number of responses (no percentage was reported by Curran) came from those working with Hispanics in the Southwest and those working with the racial mix of Hawaii.

Out of 56 possible traits presented on the questionnaire, which had been compiled by representatives of the professional groups to be surveyed, Curran reported the top fifteen. They are ranked according to the votes they received. The healthy family (1) communicates and listens; (2) affirms and supports one another; (3) teaches respect for others; (4) develops a sense of trust; (5) has a sense of play and humor; (6) exhibits a sense of shared responsibility; (7) teaches a sense of right and wrong; (8) has a strong sense of family in which rituals and traditions abound; (9) has a balance of interaction among members; (10) has a shared religious core; (11) respects the privacy of one another; (12) values service to others; (13) fosters family table time and conversation; (14) shares leisure time; (15) admits to and seeks help with problems.

Both Stinnett’s and Curran’s research, mixing as they do a potpourri of attitudes and behaviors, are attempts to show, in lay terms, what a well-functioning family looks like. One therapist, however, wrote to caution Curran about a perceived weakness in the approach of the research, “Many of these items are stereotypes and are popularly believed but have no support in the professional literature. There’s the tendency, if you aren’t careful, to identify pseudomutual families—those who look good to others—as healthy” (Curran, 1983, p. 18). Curran believed she avoided that pitfall by asking professionals to make up the questionnaire and to have professionals respond to it.

Another empirical study by Jerry Lewis and colleagues at the Timberlawn Psychiatric Research Foundation in Dallas in 1976 took a different tack (Curran, 1983; Gurman & Kniskern, 1981). Rather than

undertake a popular “poll” of family strengths, Lewis sought to determine family strengths by direct observation. Volunteers from white, upper-middle-class, urban, Protestant families were given problems to solve, videotaped and interviewed. Family interaction was evaluated via eight variables: types of disorder manifested, power structure, differentiation, communication, relationship, reality sense, affect, and attitude to change/loss. The children’s level of function was categorized as severe dysfunction, midrange function, or healthy function.

In the healthy functioning children, no evidence of psychiatric disorder was found. The characteristics of their homes were:

Power structure. Strong, equal-powered parental coalition, but children consulted and decisions through negotiation. Clear hierarchy with mutual respect.

Differentiation. Identified highly defined and secure, permitting also high levels of closeness and intimacy; high individual responsibility.

Communication. Open, clear, direct, frank. Lively and spontaneous; receptive and responsive to new ideas.

Relationship. Affiliative trust; warm, caring, mutual regard and responsibility. Ambivalent feelings accepted as normal. Mutually satisfying, complementary marital roles; sexuality mutually satisfying also.

Reality sense. Image of self and family congruent with reality.

Affect. Warmth, enjoyment, humor, wit, tenderness, empathy.

Attitude to change, loss. Change, growth, separation, and death all accepted realistically and losses worked through.

Effective Functioning Concepts From Family Therapy Theory and Practice

“Perhaps some of the most valuable contributions from the family therapy movement have to do with its characterizations of the qualities of strong families” (Jones & Butman, 1991, p. 353). Two streams of study have converged to make these contributions: family development theory and family systems theory.

Family life cycle. Successful negotiation of the predictable stresses related to passage through the stages of the family life cycle is a mark of effective family functioning. Jay Haley (1973) has highlighted the fact that symptoms are likely to occur at points of transition between stages. Unpredictable stresses can also occur in connection with the life cycle such as illness, loss of job, or death (Brown & Christensen, 1986).

Differentiation. Effective passage through the life cycle results in differentiation from one’s family of origin. James Framo (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981) notes that in the healthy family, parents will be well-differentiated, having developed a sense of self before separating from their families of origin. Loyalty to the family of procreation will be greater than to the family of origin. Carl Whitaker joins Framo in the notion that the healthy family maintains a separation of the generations (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981).

Boundaries. Salvador Minuchin supports the separation of generations using systems concepts (Minuchin, 1974). Functions of the family are carried out through an internal organization of subsystems—marital, parental, sibling. Healthy families maintain semipermeable boundaries (not too permeable or open so as to avoid enmeshment; not too impermeable or rigid so as to avoid disengagement) around their family as a whole as well as around the various subsystems.

A family that works well seems to have built-in separating devices that interfere with a tendency for relationships to follow rigid coalition rules. The generation line, like other status schisms, puts a distance between parts that might become too close. So does the demarcation around a subgroup such as the spouses. (Hoffman, 1981, p. 136)

Communication and importance of feelings. Effectively functioning families have an open communication process that allows for individuality, freedom of choice, and personal growth. “In open systems, the individual can say what he feels and thinks and can negotiate for reality and personal growth without destroying himself or the others in the system” (Satir, 1967). The effectively functioning family is in touch with deeper layers of feeling and impulses, and are thereby able to live life more completely (Whitaker & Bumberry, 1988).

Flexibility. “In a family that functions normally. . . people seem free to make alliances appropriate to necessary operations of the moment, or stages in time. This is perhaps why clinicians so often use the term *flexible* to identify a well-functioning family and *rigid* to identify a dysfunctional one” (Hoffman, 1981, p. 135).

Centrality of the marital relationship. A recurrent theme in the family systems literature is the importance placed upon the healthy relationship of marital partners to the healthy functioning of the family system (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981; Whitaker & Bumberry, 1988).

A fitting summary is that of Balswick & Balswick (1991, p. 44) who chart the various characteristics of strong and weak families. In their chart can be seen the merger of family development and family systems themes.

	Strong Families	Weak Families
Cohesion	Individuation	Enmeshment
	Mutuality	Disengagement
Adaptability	Flexibility	Rigidity
	Stability	Chaos
Communication	Clear perception	Unclear perception
	Clear communication	Unclear communication
Role structure	Agreement on roles	Conflict over roles
	Clear generational boundaries	Diffuse boundaries

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Stinnett, N., Chesser, B., & DeFrain, J. (eds). (1979). *Building family strengths*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Whitaker, C. A., & Bumberry, W. M. (1988). *Dancing with the family*. New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers.

Recommended Resource Books for Making Families Whole

Bradshaw, J. E. (1988). *Healing the shame that binds you*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc. 245 pp.

Describes the core issue of shame that results in personal and societal breakdown. Offers techniques to heal our shame, but is best in its use for diagnosis.

Curran, D. (1985). *Stress and the healthy family*. Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, Inc. 234 pp.

The functional family is one who, when faced with stress, draws upon its resources to meet that stress and often becomes a stronger family as a result of conquering it.

_____. (1983). *Traits of a healthy family*. Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, Inc. 280 pp.

Drawing on the responses of more than 500 professionals who work with families, from teachers and ministers to family therapists and youth counselors, the author assembles fifteen qualities shared by families these experts call "healthy."

Grenz, S. (1990). *Sexual ethics*. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing. 266 pp.

A thorough, contemporary discussion of human sexuality from a biblical, Christian viewpoint. Portrays the interrelatedness of sexuality with the whole being.

Olsen, V. N. (1993). *The new relatedness for man & woman in Christ: A mirror of the divine*. Loma Linda, CA: Loma Linda University, Center for Christian Bioethics. 155 pp.

In the light of a Christian understanding of the triune God, male-female relatedness, which mirrors God and expresses the Divine image, should be that of full equality, unity, mutuality, and complementarity.

Osborne, G. C. (1978). *The art of becoming a whole person*. Waco, TX: Word Publishing. 187 pp.

Examines wholeness and brokenness in the many ways they come to us: childhood experiences, religious experiences, love and marriage, stress, self-esteem needs, guilt, aging, fear and anxiety, suffering and tragedy. How to rebuild confidence and begin the journey toward wholeness.

Padovani, M. (1988). *Healing wounded emotions*. Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications. 111 pp.

How to better understand human emotions. Helps us see ourselves in all three dimensions: body, mind, and spirit, and the necessary compatibility between psychology and faith.

Peck, M. S. (1993). *A world waiting to be born*. New York: Bantam Books, Inc. 366 pp.

Draws on his extensive personal and professional experience as a psychiatrist to us how health is a process, and what happens when the pain that is a necessary part of this process is denied. Shows what we need to do to take the healing of our families (and our world) into our hands.

Rosberg, G. (1992). *Choosing to love again*. Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family Publishing. 268 pp.

Helps the reader to understand the underlying causes of conflict, find freedom from painful memories, build genuine communication, rebuild trust, and discover the healing power of forgiveness.

Seamands, D. A. (1988). *Healing grace*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. 204 pp.

Many Christians are attempting to substitute performance for grace. Instead of resting believers, they are restless achievers. Their only cure is grace—the grace which brings forgiveness, sanctification, and wholeness.

Sloat, D. E., Ph.D., (1990). *Growing up holy and wholly*. Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers, Inc. 261 pp.

Describes how the myth of “holiness” results when parental or ecclesiastical control is emphasized over grace. Those who strive for this “holiness” are unable to become whole persons because they experience an emotional split that lays the groundwork for depression, co-dependence, spiritual confusion, and family conflict.

Smedes, L. B. (1984). *Forgive and forget*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, Publishers. 151 pp.

Shows how anyone can tap the power of forgiveness to achieve healthier relationships and peace of mind. Explains the steps in the four stages of forgiveness: hurting, hating, healing, and reconciliation.

Talley, J. (1985). *Reconcilable differences*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. 171 pp.

Shows why it is worth the effort for troubled couples to try again and how it can be done. Describes individual situations where love was rekindled and gives specific guidelines for overcoming the differences in a marriage that cause alienation and lead to separation.

Vander Goot, M. (1987). *Healthy emotions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House. 148 pp.

How to deal effectively with children’s emotions. Gives the reader rich resources for answering questions like these: What is emotional health? How do children communicate their emotions to adults? How do adults shape the emotions of children?