

Scriptural Help for OUR FAMILY

Foreword

There is much material produced on the subject of how to have a happy family. Some are valuable, use them as needed but we urge caution, judging them against the Scriptures before taking their advice. For even those stamped with the approval of religion must be examined closely. This treatise will inform you what the Scriptures say about the family, a Resource that should be considered authoritative in establishing the foundation for relations within your home, because Yahweh, the Creator of families, knows best.

If you wanted just to read the italicized Scriptures, that would be sufficient. Comment has been included with the prayer to aid your understanding, stimulate your thinking and study, and provide what we feel is appropriate emphasis. Nevertheless, we encourage you to adhere to the Scriptures above these comments or anything else you may read or hear.

We offer this treatise with the assurance that readers can build stronger, more enjoyable and more fruitful families by using the help offered by our loving heavenly Father. Your comments and questions are welcome.

In applying the lessons contained in this treatise, you will find it most useful to study it carefully on the first reading, and then re-read it periodically or when a problem arises. If your family is important to you, we urge you to spend time together on any of the suggested projects. Since the text is mostly free of stories and repetition, it may be less fun and require more exercise from the reader.

The Scripture quotations are taken from *The Scriptures, TS 2009* (unless otherwise noted) which have the Sacred Names restored. Rest assured that we are not twisting the Scriptures, but please also read them from your own version of the Scriptures. Yours may not exactly read the same, but we trust you will receive the same message. We haven't selected unsupported references, or misappropriated verses to make a different point, or used a translation which gives an unusual or incorrect reading.

In the text and in Scripture quotations, you will find the personal Name of the Creator, Yahweh, and the given Name of His Son, our Savior, Yahshua (similar to Joshua) which means, "Yahweh saves." These Names are used in several versions of the Scriptures and are coming into more common usage. The Hebrew term, Elohim, will also be seen; it means "mighty being" and has most often been translated god or God in English Bibles. For more information, please request *The Mistaken J* free of charge.

May Yahweh bless your study into this vital subject!

Getting the Help We Need

See how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity, Psalms 133:1.

And if it seems evil in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves this day whom you are going to serve, whether the mighty ones which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the mighty ones of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But I and my house, we serve Yahweh, Joshua 24:15.

In ancient times, there were men who ruled with great power, even at their whim, exercising power over life and death of their subjects. But in more recent times, there has been a good trend toward promoting equality among people, so that autocratic rule is regarded with suspicion, mistrust, or hatred.

Nevertheless, the institution of marriage has suffered attack from the forces of 'equality' and 'liberation'. In many cases the attack has been justified; Yahweh never intended a man or woman would be oppressed or abused by their spouse. He holds men and women in equally high regard and intends for us to do the same. In other cases, misguided people are attacking this institution of marriage which ironically, could produce the things they desperately need and long for.

Whatever the reasons may be, there has been a great change in our society which affects the family. Everyone has a family, and success relationships in the family are very important. When the family is working well, it yields a blessing which reaches out to many people who do not even live in the same home. On the other hand, when relationships within the family fail in some way, it always results in pain, even tragedy, for many innocent people. So, just what does it mean for a family to fail or to succeed? And how can a family move from failure toward success?

Yahweh wants families to be good for each of us, and how we order the conduct of our families is very important to Yahweh. He once based the greatest physical blessing ever given on this factor: He blessed the descendants of Abraham, saying, *For I have known him, so that he commands his children and his household after him, to guard the way of Yahweh, to do righteousness and right-ruling, so that Yahweh brings to Abraham what He has spoken to him*, Genesis 18:19.

In the Scriptures, Yahweh has given a great many commandments, principles, and examples to help us receive the blessings He wants us to enjoy. He particularly loves, and has concern for small children. He has given us many ways with which to make their young lives better and more enjoyable and that will provide a better foundation for their adult lives. And when children have true, lasting, properly-based happiness, their parents will always benefit as well. And if you will commit yourself to following Yahweh's ways, He promises you a blessing.

See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil, in that I am commanding you today to love Yahweh your Elohim, to walk in His ways, and to guard His commands, and His laws, and His right-rulings. And you shall live and increase, and Yahweh your Elohim shall bless you in the land which you go to possess, Deuteronomy 30:15-16.

Put yourself and your family into Yahweh's gentle, wise, and loving hands. Yahweh's ways are good for your family. Many families have walked Yahweh's way and been richly blessed for it. Add your family among their numbers. Learn all you can from your Creator, and put it into practice for those whom you love most.

At this point, some may be thinking to themselves that they will peruse the rest of this discourse to see if there are some ideas they can use. That's fine, you will be blessed for following whatever portion of Yahweh's path you are ready to follow. But we would urge you with caution, to keep track of the results. For when His promise of blessings is tried and proven, then accept the rest of what you have been given and reap all the blessings Yahweh's reserved for you.

But let each one examine his own work, and then he shall have boasting in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own burden. And let him who is instructed in the Word share in all that is good, with him who is instructing. Do not be led astray: Elohim is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he shall also reap. Because he who sows to his own flesh shall reap corruption from the flesh, but he who sows to the Spirit shall reap everlasting life from the Spirit. And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, as we have occasion, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of the belief, Galatians 6:4-10.

Direction for the Family

Like any group, a family needs to have a clear idea why it exists and the direction it strives to go. Family members should discuss what the family should give to each member and what each should contribute back to the family. Goals should not just be established and forgotten. They are used every day to guide decisions and actions and should be added to, and modified, as things change with time.

When you observe an established family doing something which seems desirable, make a note of it, and talk with them about how that happened. Before marriage, and with your fiancé, dream and set goals for your family before you get married.

A family begins when a man leaves his father and his mother and stays with his wife and they become one flesh (Gen. 2:24). This does not mean to say that the couple moves in with her parents! Married couples should have their own home. It is good for a couple to have family support nearby, but it is important for a new family to 'grow in its own soil'.

When a couple become married, they usually have some idea of the kind of home they wish to have, and it is good they do. They may not only have a vision for their house, but they may also visualize what their children will be like; what it will be like having their family sitting at dinner in animated conversation.

But very often, as the years pass, the vision becomes just a dim memory as the children grow up and become distant and the once-loving young couple grows apart.

Today, families grow up and grow away. It seems only a few seem to place a high value on maintaining family relationships. Most families are not held together by the parents' sense of honor toward the commitments they made to one another, nor by the children's feelings of loyalty. Family members stay together only because of what each family member gets from being in the family. If a member is dissatisfied with the family, he may continue to appear to be a family member but is actually withdrawn from being a real, emotional part of family life.

But it does not have to be that way. Children can stay close to their parents, even through the difficult teen years and into the time of raising their own families. Couples can grow closer and closer, with more love, understanding and appreciation for each other as the years pass.

Husbands

The core of the family is the relationship between the husband and his wife. We shall look at the husband first.

Whether you are a man and a husband, or a woman and a wife, or aspiring to become a husband or wife, read the following

We may look to Yahweh as the example of a good husband. In Old Testament times, Yahweh is shown as a husband to the nation of Israel:

And I shall take you as a bride unto Me forever, and take you as a bride unto Me in righteousness, and in right-ruling, and loving-commitment and compassion. And I shall take you as a bride unto Me in trustworthiness, and you shall know Yahweh, Hosea 2:19-20.

"For your Maker is your husband, Yahweh of hosts is His Name, and the Set-apart One of Israel is your Redeemer. He is called the Elohim of all the earth. For Yahweh has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when you were refused," declares your Elohim, Isaiah 54:5-6.

"Return, O backsliding children," declares Yahweh, "for I shall rule over you, and shall take you, one from a city and two from a clan, and shall bring you to Zion," Jeremiah 3:14.

The full meaning of Yahweh being the husband of His people is made clear in the New Testament. Paul writes:

*Husbands, love your wives, as Messiah also did love the assembly and gave Himself for it, in order to set it apart and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, in order to present it to Himself a splendid assembly, not having spot or wrinkle or any of this sort, but that it might be set-apart and blameless. In this way husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but feeds and cherishes it, as also the Master does the assembly. Because we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. **For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.** This secret is great, but I speak concerning Messiah and the assembly. However, you too, everyone, let each one love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she fears her husband, Ephesians 5:25-33.*

How rich this Scripture is in help for the husband! Did you notice that Paul shows that love is not just a feeling a man has about his wife, but is rather the constant series of acts by which he takes special care of her? He nourishes and cherishes her at least as well as he takes care of his own body. If a man is trying to be a successful husband, he can look to His perfect example, Yahshua, Who gave of Himself for His Bride, the Called-Out Ones.

He began by giving up his place in heaven with the Father to be born as a baby human being. Next, he devoted His life to preparing for, and carrying out, a ministry of love: teaching and healing the people of His time, and of ours. Finally, He suffered on the tree and gave up His life so that those people who accept and obey Him, could be saved from death and join Him in eternal life. A husband who devotes himself to his family in that way, will certainly enjoy the fruits of a happy home. Meditate on that.

Husbands will also find help in other Scriptures:

When a man has taken a new wife, let him not go out into the army nor let any matter be imposed upon him. He shall be exempt one year for the sake of his home, to rejoice with his wife whom he has taken, Deuteronomy 24:5.

The command to ‘cheer up’ his wife could be read as a directive to a man to laugh, romp and giggle with his wife too. If you are a boss, don’t give a newly-wedded man too much to do, that he may have time with his bride. Helping him lay the foundation for his good marriage is more important to the business than any other activity the man may be assigned.

Near the end of the year he may gradually return into a more aggressive pursuit of his full responsibilities. But he should never stop caring for his wife in a special way, neither cease toward building that relationship.

If you muffed that first year of taking special care to make your wife happy, then make it a point to set time aside during the next several months. Court her again. Listen to her. Tell her your thoughts. Occupy your time with her pleasure. A marriage relationship is built by many hours of talking with, and listening to, each other. A little giggling would also be appropriate. Let all those activities be directed toward establishing the unique relationship between the two of you. Nurture your ‘first love’.

Even if you used that first year properly for bonding, be sure to ‘review’ frequently. Keep that bond strong and fresh by doing the things you did when you were courting and honeymooning. Do you remember those days? Keep your marriage special! The husband should never stop caring for his wife in a special way so as to continue to build that relationship.

And bear in mind that, at any time, Yahweh will gladly hear your prayer for His help in loving, understanding and communicating with your mate. Ask today for His help, then expect it, and work with it.

Following, are a few Scriptures to guide your marriage relationship:

And if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the belief and is worse than an unbeliever, 1 Timothy 5:8.

Is Paul saying there is something wrong with a man who does not pay his bills and provide a decent home for his family? He certainly is, and we should know that without reading the Scripture.

In the same way, husbands, live understandingly together, giving respect to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the favor of life, so that your prayers are not hindered, 1 Peter 3:7.

Don't be foolish. Respect your wife as you ought to respect her, since she is also a child of Yahweh. There may be a prayer someday which you desperately want Him to answer. If you fail to love, care for, and respect your wife, then Yahweh will not listen to your prayers. It will depend on respecting your wife!

Concentrate on giving your wife plenty of affection; real two-way conversation; openness in your communication; steady (not necessarily lavish) financial support, and let her know by your words and actions that you have a strong commitment to your family.

You shall not commit adultery, Exodus 20:14.

Take your Creator's word for it – marriage between one man and one woman who have had no other sexual partners in their lives are much more likely to succeed and be happy. Children need to know that fact because it greatly affects their future.

Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, Rivers of water in the streets? Let them be only your own, And not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth – A loving deer and a pleasant doe! Let her breasts satisfy you at all times. And be captivated by her love always, Proverbs 5:15-19.

... Yahweh has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have acted treacherously, though she is your companion and the wife of your covenant. And did He not make one? And He had the remnant of the Spirit? And what is the one alone? He seeks a seed of Elohim. So you shall guard your spirit, and let none act treacherously against the wife of his youth.

“For I hate divorce,” said Yahweh Elohim of Israel, “and the one who covers his garment with cruelty,” said Yahweh of hosts. “So you shall guard your spirit, and do not act treacherously,” Malachi 2:14-16.

Since divorce displeases Yahweh, helps lawyers get rich, and hurts children for life, it should be avoided. As Paul said, do everything within your power to live at peace with your spouse.

We will discover more to say about the husband's role in the family, later. but we will see it in the sections on Husband-wife relationships and on children. A GOOD HINT: Hug your wife and tell her you love her at least four times each day.

He who has found a wife has found good, and receives favor from Yahweh, Proverbs 18:22.

The reason a man was given a wife is found in the familiar words of the One who created both of them. *And Yahweh Elohim said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I am going to make a helper for him, as his counterpart,” Genesis 2:18.*

Wives

There are clearly some ways in which a man cannot be fully effective by himself. Even if men could somehow have had sons by themselves, there would still have been a great void in that arrangement. Yahweh knew the characteristics of the man when He made him and saved a group of features for inclusion in a splendid later model, the woman. She was based on the earlier, larger, more powerful model (Gen. 2:23) but had smoother lines (physically and emotionally) and a different purpose, complimentary, and complementary, to that of the man. Only together can they form a complete unit.

These verses from Genesis tell the reasons and purposes Yahweh had in mind when men and women were created. If we would keep all this original relationship in mind, it could help our families a great deal. One of the best ways to learn what a scripturally-ideal wife should be, is to study the word picture painted in Proverbs 31:10-31.

Read the Scripture carefully. Below is a paraphrase which may give a sense of the meaning for today's woman and her family.

The Super-wife: If a man finds a really good wife, she is much more valuable to him than a very expensive piece of jewelry.

There is a deep, personal, growing trust between her and her husband and she is also a benefit to him financially. For their entire lives together, she is a real blessing to him and never causes him harm.

She looks for ways she can keep busy and she is happy doing her work. She checks things out and she's not afraid to travel a little to save on something she needs.

Early in the morning you'll find her making breakfast and lunches for the family, getting things ready for an active day. She plans for the food needs of the family, and if she is given a plot to plant, she works in it until it's a worthwhile garden.

She takes care of her own health and all that activity makes her physically strong (making her a good match in arm wrestling with her teen-age sons).

She has her own successful little business at home. If she is selling, she knows the value of what she has produced; she has worked on it long into the night, perhaps sewing, cooking, knitting, or even weaving something very special.

The poor among her acquaintances know that she often comes to visit, bringing something good to eat or something for one of the young children. She goes out of her way to help any needy people. Several children will begin to call her 'Grandma', or 'Auntie', even before she has many grey hairs.

When autumn comes, she rests secure in the knowledge her family has the right winter clothing. Her own clothing is of the best quality. She may even have made it herself; something special that you just can't buy in the stores.

Her husband is an important man and his friends and business associates are the leaders from all around.

Strength and dignity are the noticeable qualities of this woman. She anticipates the future with a happy confidence. She knows all of Yahweh's laws, but seems most familiar with those dealing with kindness and love.

She works hard to take good care of her family. Her children will stand up anywhere and tell people what a wonderful mother she is, and her husband always seems to be bragging about her,

There are many fine young women but clever and beautiful women are sometimes a problem. But the woman who fears Yahweh, that's the kind of woman to find! She can enjoy the nice home she has created and she should hear often, how very much she is appreciated!

Perhaps we need say no more. But there are several Scriptures which follow, further defining the role of, and positive attributes, of a good wife and which also, contribute to happy living.

Good wives, young and old, defer their desires to their husbands (Gen. 3:16). Good wives are not idle, neither go about from house to house as gossips and busybodies, speaking things improper (1 Tim. 5:13). Good wives are well-reported for good works, are sober-minded and trustworthy in every way (1 Tim. 5:11).

... the older women likewise are to be set-apart in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of what is good, in order for them to train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, blameless, workers at home, good, subject to their own husbands, in order that the word of Elohim is not evil spoken of, Titus 2:3-5.

A capable wife is the crown of her husband, but one causing shame is like rottenness in his bones, Proverbs 12:4. For it is better to dwell in a corner of a roof, than in a house shared with a contentious woman, Proverbs 21:9 and 25:24; it is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman, Proverbs 21:19 – the contentions of which, are like a continual dripping (Prov. 19:13).

Does this mean that when you are fighting with your husband you can expect him to find something to do in the attic or go out for a long walk? Well, the Scripture may not be completely clear, but it is clear that every wise woman will build her house, while the foolish one will pluck it down with her hands (or with her tongue) (Prov. 14:1).

And what should the role of the woman be in Assembly?

Let a woman learn in silence, in all subjection. But I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, rather to be in silence, 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

Let your women be silent in the assemblies, for they are not allowed to speak, but let them subject themselves, as the Torah says. And if they wish to learn whatever, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is improper for women to speak in an assembly, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

Wives, remember your husbands need sexual fulfillment; companionship; a wife whose modest appearance and demeanor they can be proud; support at home for their work or business activities; and admiration from their wives and children.

Even good wives who find themselves unequally yoked, having come into the faith after marriage, will conduct themselves so as to be a witness to their unbelieving husbands.

In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that if any are disobedient to the Word, they, without a word, might be won by the behavior of their wives, having seen your blameless behavior in fear. Your adornment should not be outward – arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on dresses – but the hidden man of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a meek and peaceable spirit, which is of great value before Elohim. For in this way, in former times, the set-apart women who trusted in Elohim also adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him master, of whom you became children, doing good, and not frightened by any fear. In the same way, husbands, live understandingly together, giving respect to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the favor of life, so that your prayers are not hindered, 1 Peter 3:1-7.

If you need instruction in, or explanation of, any of these things don't talk it over with your young friends. Ask a dedicated older person, for they have been appointed to teach and help in that way.

Vows of Wives

When a woman makes a commitment or vow, it is often subject to ratification by the man who is her protector. Notice that her husband (or her father if she is unmarried) does not make a vow for her, but has only the authority for 'one day', to release her from a vow she has made without consulting him.

But if she at all belongs to a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, and her husband hears it, and he has kept silent towards her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself do stand. But if her husband forbids her on the day that he hears it, then he has nullified her vow which she vowed, and the rash utterance of her lips by which she bound herself, and Yahweh pardons her. ... Every vow and every binding oath to afflict her being, let her husband confirm it, or let her husband nullify it. But if her husband is altogether silent at her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all the agreements that bind her – he confirms them, because he kept silent towards her on the day that he heard. But if he nullifies them after he has heard, then he shall bear her crookedness. These are the laws which Yahweh commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father's house, Numbers 30:6-8, 13-16.

The Husband-Wife Relationship

In some ways, this connection is like any good relationship between two people: built on respect, courtesy and friendliness. With those elements in the marriage relationship, there is nothing else in human experience with which to make comparison.

Let's go back to Genesis 2:23-24:

And Adam said, "Now this is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

In Matthew 19:5, we read that Yahshua the Messiah referenced this institution. From the time of creation, to His time, marriage between one man and one woman had not become archaic.

Nevertheless, it is impossible but what offenses will come. When a married person makes a mistake which brings hurt to their mate, the mate should not choose to react in that same irrational way. Early in the marriage, both the man and the woman are still learning about, and coping with, each other's 'falling short' of where they'd like to be. One may have to tell the other that he/she has been hurt. One might have to say something like, "I know you didn't mean to hurt me, but I felt kind of hurt and 'alone' when you made that remark." Let the trespasser chalk that up to the record.

With the passing of time during which they grow into this 'oneness', each comes to know what will hurt or annoy the other, and strive to avoid that circumstance. For they are becoming, more nearly, one flesh.

Usually, people marry someone having about the same I.Q. (intelligence quotient) as their own. So, when one errs, the other can say, "I make mistakes like that, too" or, "I'm still a work in progress." They react to an undesirable action of their mate as a sensible person would react to a mistake of their own.

When you look at marriage in this way, with both the man and the woman so emotionally and spiritually close, divorce is never a consideration!

“Cleave unto his wife” means get and stay very close to her. While both husband and wife must be involved in this project called “marriage,” it seems to be more of a challenge for the man. Perhaps that is why the command is directed primarily towards “a man.”

Keeping in mind this close, oneness of flesh, we can now establish the hierarchal relationship from 1 Corinthians 11:3-12:

And I wish you to know that the head of every man is the Messiah, and the head of woman is the man, and the head of Messiah is Elohim. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, brings shame to his Head. And every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered brings shame to her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed should not cover his head, since he is the likeness and esteem of Elohim, but woman is the esteem of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. For man also was not created for the woman, but woman for the man. Because of this the woman ought to have authority on her head, because of the messengers. However, man is not independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Master. For as the woman was from the man, even so the man also is through the woman. But all are from Elohim.

This Scripture passage describes an ideal world in which the wife happily accepts the husband’s final decision and the husband is striving to be yielded to the Messiah in every way. As a marriage matures properly, the question of proper headship hardly comes up. How can one ‘lord it over’ another if they are one flesh? They communicate with each other so closely that the husband’s decision is shared, understood, grasped, appreciated and agreed to by the wife. And the wise and loving husband gently takes responsibility to make sure that it is.

The command for a wife to be submissive to her husband does not mean the man is better than the woman. It simply sets out a working order that is in harmony with the way Yahweh created them and the rest of creation. That command is also found in Genesis 3:16, Ephesians 5:22, Colossians 3:18, 1 Timothy 2:12, Titus 2:5, and 1 Peter 3:1, 6.

How beautiful it is, a wife who follows with, supports and encourages her beloved husband. How pleased her parents must be, too, with her, peace and security!

The Corinthians had written to Paul asking some questions about marriage and about relationships between unmarried people. We read the Apostle’s reply in his first letter to the Corinthians. *And concerning the matters you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But because of whoring, let each one have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife what is her due, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does,* 1 Corinthians 7:1-4.

Every marriage ceremony includes the promise to love your spouse. That is why Paul talks about married people being entitled to love. Notice that he includes physical love, expressed with their bodies. Not always perhaps, but generally, the husband has a greater need for physical relations than his wife. Many wives do not appreciate their husband’s deep need for physical intimacy. And many husbands do not get the intimate relationship they would like, because they do not appreciate or fulfill their wives’ deep need for affection.

Paul continues: *Do not deprive one another except with agreement for a time, to give yourselves to fasting and prayer. And come together again so that Satan does not try you because of your lack of self-control. And I say this as a concession, not as a command,* Verses 5-6.

One might wish there should be more in the Scripture about marital, conjugal relationships. The Scriptures are silent about the mechanics of sexuality because we can discover what we need,

ourselves. Often you can learn all you need to know by asking your spouse what he or she would like, but keep in mind that Yahweh's principles of love, fidelity, respect and fulfillment of the proper roles are the basis of a happy marriage and, consequently, a happy family. Hence, this is the bottom line: each has the rule over the other's body. One person described marriage as a community of two loving masters and two obedient slaves, making in all ... two.

Now, more commands concerning marriage: *And to the married I command, not I, but the Master: A wife should not separate from a husband. But if she is indeed separated, let her remain unmarried or be restored to favor with her husband, and let a husband not send away a wife,* 1 Verses 10-11.

Paul is explaining what should be obvious. Two true believers cannot become divorced, although they may live apart for a time. *And to the rest I say, not the Master: If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she thinks well to live with him, let him not send her away. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he thinks well to live with her, let her not send him away. For the unbelieving husband has been set-apart in the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been set-apart in the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are set-apart. And, if the unbelieving one separates, let him separate himself. A brother or a sister has not been enslaved in such matters. But Elohim has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you shall save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you shall save your wife?* Verses 12-16.

What does this mean? Paul is saying that even if your spouse does not yet believe, you must continue in the marriage as long as he/she wishes. However, if the unbelieving spouse is abusive, then it is apparent he/she does not want to live properly with the believer. Yahweh calling the believing spouse to peace releases him/her from continuing in an abusive relationship.

Well, what about the occasional marital argument? Simply follow this rule: Discuss, listen, use logic and bring in appropriate facts but don't shout, ever try to hurt, or dredge up the long past. As heirs together of the grace of life, let your relationship with Yahweh be one of the things you share. Come before Yahweh's throne hand-in-hand together, regularly.

Sometimes, a couple will have an argument just before leaving for Sabbath services. If that happens, the Messiah's words here mean that you must put off going to services and be reconciled with each other before you may begin to worship. Resolve the problem, drop it forever, and then go together in peace to worship the Prince of Peace, as it is written:

If, then, you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your [spouse] holds whatever against you, leave your [prayer] there before the altar, and go, first make peace with your [spouse], and then come and offer your [prayer], Matthew 5:23-24.

Married people should remember that Yahweh made men different from women. Just as they have different personalities, talents, and abilities, they also have different needs. In general a man needs sexual fulfillment, companionship, an attractive wife, support at home and the admiration of his wife. A woman needs affection, conversation, openness, financial support, and a strong commitment to the family from her husband. We have devoted a lot of space to the husband-wife relationship; but every couple must understand that this is the basis for a happy and successful family, good, happy and successful children, and even for happy grandchildren. It often takes effort, patience and subordinating yourself to the other, but there is no better reward on earth than a good marriage and family.

Finally, Paul gives this advice:

Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But even if you should marry, you have not sinned. And if a maiden should marry, she has

not sinned. But such shall have pressure in the flesh, but I would spare you. ... And I wish you to be without concern. He who is unmarried is concerned about the [matters] of the Master – how to please the Master. But he who is married is concerned about the [matters] of the world – how to please his wife. There is a difference between a wife and a maiden. The unmarried woman is concerned about the [matters] of the Master, that she might be set-apart both in body and in spirit. But she who is married is concerned about the [matters] of the world – how to please her husband, 1 Corinthians 7:27-28, 32-34.

Television, a Distraction to Family Time

Here's another verse from Chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians, taken from the **King James Version**, with which to introduce another topic of interest in building the family:

And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Master without distraction, 1 Corinthians 7:35.

The Scriptures make no specific mention of motion pictures, television, video games, or any of its derivatives. Yet there are verses that are applicable to indulging in these **distractions**.

*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. ... He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight, Psalms 101:1, 7, **KJV**.*

Look at these verses! Does that sound like television, or what? Think about the many ways, TV hurts your family and especially your children. Keep this principle in mind if you do have a television set: People are much more important than anything on TV. If you have opportunity to spend time with a family member instead of watching TV, DO IT. If a family member wants to say something to you while you are watching TV, give them your undivided attention rather than continuing to watch TV. That's why you have a remote, with a MUTE or, POWER OFF button.

Children Share Covenant with Parents

Look, children are an inheritance from Yahweh, the fruit of the womb is His reward, Psalms 127:3.

A family really happens, when children appear. When a married couple have children they have assumed an important responsibility. Father and mother are the enduring core and leadership of the family, but the presence of children is what gives the family meaning and purpose. We will now explore what children should bring to the family and how the parents and children should interact.

First of all, the relationship of husband and wife becomes even more important when a child is present. In so many ways, the welfare of a child depends upon the love and respect his or her parents have FOR EACH OTHER. Do not forget that every child has a Friend in high places looking out for his/her welfare. *See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in the heavens their messengers always see the face of My Father who is in the heavens, Matthew 18:10.*

Every family is commanded to attend Sabbath services each week, and the annual feasts of Yahweh as instructed in Leviticus 23. These are so important occasions, that we are commanded to devote a tithe of our increase to keeping the festivals. Read our mini-study entitled **Yahweh's Appointed Feast Days**. The joyous feast of Tabernacles is described in Deuteronomy 14:22-25, then in verse 26 we read, *And you shall use the silver for whatever your being desires: for cattle or sheep, for wine or strong drink, for whatever your being desires. And you shall eat there before Yahweh your Elohim, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.*

Yahweh has no greater joy, than to both see and hear His children walking with rejoicing, in the Truth (3 John 1:4).

Many parents regard their children as a second chance – making a travesty by attempting to shape their children’s abilities, instead of sharing in their abilities though of concern to us, in this discourse, is providing our children with that training, nurture, and admonition that we may not have had. We may have had a poor home environment, little or no encouragement, or no one who told us what was right and why. Our children need not to suffer any of that.

Humorous remarks, family jokes and a playful attitude are characteristics of a strong family. Sharing laughter creates an atmosphere of warmth, openness and ease. Sharing a funny story or experience when the family is together should be encouraged. Remember to keep the humor of the non-destructive type, for our children need suffer none of that. We may do a barely adequate job of parenting at times, but our children should at least be prepared to be excellent parents. We may not have been very astute when we chose our mate to become their father or mother, but our children should have the benefit of the very best preparation and counsel for making that decision. Maybe we weren’t the very wisest parents at all times, but we should resolve that, at least, we’ll strive to give our grandchildren that benefit of wise parents.

In almost every covenant in the Scriptures (those special agreements made between Yahweh and men) the benefits and responsibilities accrued to the descendants as well as to the covenantors themselves.

A good example is Yahweh’s covenant with Abraham. *And I shall establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be Elohim to you and your seed after you. And I shall give to you and your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession. And I shall be their Elohim,* Genesis 17:7-8.

Other examples may be found in Genesis 6:18, 12:7, 13:15, 19:12, 21:13, 26:3, 26:24-45; 2 Samuel 7:8-16; Isaiah 65:23, and 1 Corinthians 7:14. Naturally, if the parents fail to establish a relationship with Yahweh, the children can derive no benefit. You secure blessings for your children by entering into, and maintaining covenant with Yahweh!

And, of course, children are connected to the Abrahamic covenant through their parents. Jewish people still circumcise their boys in obedience to a covenant made 4 millennia ago (Gen. 17:9-14). Read our mini-study entitled, ***The Hope of Israel***.

Today, one of the first things you will want to do for your children is to have the elders of the congregation ask Yahweh’s protection and blessing upon them.

And they were bringing little children for Him to touch them, but the taught ones were rebuking those who were bringing them. And when Yahshua saw it, He was much displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the reign of Elohim. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the reign of Elohim as a little child, shall certainly not enter into it.” And taking them up in His arms, laying His hands on them, He blessed them, Mark 10:13-16.

Yahshua led by example, and left us an example, having children blessed by the spiritual leader and told His disciples. It seems appropriate to say, “Go and do thou likewise.”

In some cases, the prayers of parents for their children are not very effective ... like when children are unrighteous, they suffered for their sins regardless of the prayers of their righteous parents. This was true of Job’s children (Job 1:5, 13-15) and of David’s son born of Uriah’s wife. (2 Sam. 12:14-23). The surest way to secure the blessings of Yahweh upon your children is to teach them to obey Him in sincerity and in truth. Yes, pray for your children; but pray mostly that

they will have parents wise enough to teach them to walk in the ways of righteousness. That is the only thing that will bring them life, joy, peace and safety.

The Family Should be Taught Yahweh's Word

One ancient Scripture sums up the atmosphere, in a home dedicated to Yahweh. The words of the Master of the house, Yahweh, are everywhere.

And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk about them when you sit in your house, when walk by the way, when you lie down and when you arise. And you shall bind them for a sign on your hand and they shall be frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

You may notice in each home, that the words of Yahweh are found first in the parents' hearts, in their inner beings. The parents give them gladly to their children at every opportunity: sitting at home; driving in the car; when it's time to go to bed, and when they get up in the morning. The parents have Yahweh's laws in their mind and in all they do, and they have even written them in inside, about the house. They make especially sure they are near the door, so that those who leave will be reminded to keep the laws for their guidance and protection when they are out of the house, and those who enter may find peace, at home. (Many Jewish people have the custom of touching the Law which is near the door each time they enter or leave their home.) Oh, how these parents love their family, to give them the Words of Life!

Is that 'too much religion'? Is *it* more than what secular education is preparing their children for a life's occupation? Is *it* more than the amount of television their children are viewing? Is *it* more than the time their children give to their electronic devices?

Considering the importance of the subject, 'too much religion' ought to be more than all these other activities put together.

While 'too much religion' may seem to indicate a large percentage of time devoted to talking about Yahweh and His ways, it really is not. 'Too much religion' only takes a few minutes to discuss the error of something our children have seen or heard and the consequences of that error compared to the benefits of following Yahweh's way. (Read the book, *The One Minute Mother* by Ken Blanchard for a good lesson on how to make the most of short time periods spent with your children.)

Yes, "*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the reign of Elohim. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the reign of Elohim as a little child, shall certainly not enter into it.*" And taking them up in His arms, laying His hands on them, He blessed them, Mark 10:14-16.

Children Should be Properly Governed

... and all your children taught by Yahweh, and the peace of your children great, Isaiah 54:13. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children, ("lest they be discouraged," Col. 3:21): but bring them up in the instruction and admonition of the Master, Ephesians 6:4.

Children under five may need a gentle, loving spanking to establish the parent's authority and communicate clearly what is expected and what is not allowed – else, if they are not gently but firmly disciplined, they will grow into young people who lack self-discipline. Such people are always unhappy.

Other Scriptures which show the value of loving discipline for a child are:

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him, seeks him with discipline, Proverbs 13:24.

Discipline your son because there is expectation, and do not set your being on his destruction, Proverbs 19:18.

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline drives it far from him, Proverbs 22:15.

A rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child unrestrained brings shame to his mother, Proverbs 29:15.

Scripturally disciplining a child improves behavior which enhances the bond of love between the parents and the child.

As a child gets older, physical discipline becomes less desirable and less effective, although it may still be called for occasionally. The frequency of its administration will depend on the need of the child. When a parent has to spank an older child, he should look upon the occasion as an alternative of the best child-rearing. But when required, still administer discipline with love.

There are ways of dealing with behavior problems in children over age two or three without administering corporal discipline ... ways which promote good behavior. Good parents don't give up until they have found means by which their child's behavior is improved; means by which the bond of love between parent and child is not impaired.

These parents discuss alternatives together, pray separately, and together, for guidance and talk to more experienced parents, trying different approaches until they have accomplished their objective. A good parent looks upon this as his/her crucially important life's work.

As a mother looks well to the ways of her household, so the father rules his house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity. (With respect to the father, this qualification is principal among them who desire the office of a spiritual overseer or a candidate for the diaconal ministry (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12).

Discipline must be measured carefully, as it is an important opportunity for the child. **Wise** parents never discipline a child when they are angry. The cost of making a serious mistake is not worth the risk. Cool down, get the facts attending the presumed transgression, and discipline your children with love. Disciplining a child is only to help, improve and benefit the child; never so that an angry parent can 'let off some steam'.

Before a child is corrected or disciplined, he/she must know that he or she has done something wrong. The rules of your house must be clear, fair and well-known to the children. When a child needs discipline the parent may want to take the child to a private place and have a talk with him or her. Here is a sample:

"Jacob, do you know why I asked you to come and talk with me?"

"No, Daddy."

"I think you do know. Did you just take Esau's toy car away from him?"

"Yes, Daddy. But he took my dinosaur book yesterday."

"Well, that may be something for Esau and I to talk about; but does that make it all right to take something from Esau?"

"No."

"What is the rule?"

"I can't take somebody else's things."

"You broke the rule, didn't you?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"Do you remember why we have that rule?"

“It’s one of the commandments.”

“Yes, Jacob, that’s right. Yahweh gave it to us for our good. It’s one of the ways He helps us to be happy. Jacob, you also did this a few days ago. I guess you didn’t learn from sitting on a chair for ten minutes. What do you think it will take to help you remember not to take other people’s things?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, there are three things we could try. I’ll let you choose. Sitting in a chair for thirty minutes, three spanks with the paddle or no treats for two days. Which do you think will work the best?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, which do you think is the worst?”

“No treats for two days.”

“Okay, then we won’t do that. I don’t like the paddle very much so let’s try sitting in the chair for thirty minutes. You can stay right here in my room. When the clock says 3:14 you come and see me. I’ll write it down for you on this paper.”

. . . “Daddy, the time is up.”

“Well, how did it go? Do you think you learned what you needed to learn? Will you remember not to take things from people?”

“Yes, I think so.”

“Good. Now go tell Esau you’re sorry and then come back to me.”

“I told Esau I’m sorry. He said, ‘OK’.”

“That’s good! I love you, Jacob. And it makes me happy when you are generous and kind. You will be happier too. I’m glad you are going to do right after this. Come, give me a hug.”

“I love you, Daddy.” (Daddy gets a kiss, too.)

“I love you too. Now you can go play.”

“OK.”

“Yahweh bless you, Jacob.”

“Thank you, Daddy.”

While little Jacob and his Dad are somewhat idealized for the purposes of this illustration, we can see the elements of good discipline.

1. Review the rule. Be sure the child understands well. If he didn’t, then explain it so he does understand and let him off this time. (Be alert for selective stupidity in your children. A normal child does not ‘forget’ or ‘not hear’ very often.)
2. Review how the child broke the rule. Tip: Focus on attitude.
3. Agree on a corrective discipline which will prevent another infraction.
4. Carry out the corrective discipline.
5. Repair or forgive any damage caused by the disobedience.
6. Have the child promise not to do it again.
7. That infraction is now **COMPLETELY ERASED. NEVER SKIP THIS LAST STEP!**
8. Happily welcome the child back into good standing.

Parents must keep in mind the vast difference between this goal-directed, loving discipline and striking the kid when he makes you mad enough.

As children grow older, they take a greater part in correcting their own behavior. When our children become adults, they have to be entirely self-disciplined. They do not suddenly wake up with this ability on the morning of their eighteenth birthday. The purposes of discipline are to help the child enjoy a better future; to help him grow closer to those who teach him right ways; and

finally, to make it easier for him to obey Yahweh and thereby, enter into His kingdom. Discipline is truly an act of love as the following Scriptures say:

I am to be his Father, and he is My son. If he does perversely, I shall reprove him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men, 2 Samuel 7:14.

Blessed is the man You discipline, O Yah, and instruct out of Your Torah, Psalms 94:12.

Thus you shall know in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so Yahweh your Elohim disciplines you, Deuteronomy 8:5.

And you have forgotten the appeal which speaks to you as to sons, “My son, do not despise the discipline of Yahweh, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him, for whom Yahweh loves, He disciplines ...” If you endure discipline, Elohim is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom a father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become sharers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Moreover, we indeed had fathers of our flesh disciplining us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they indeed disciplined us for a few days as seemed best to them, but He does it for our profit, so that we might share His apartness. And indeed, no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but grievous, but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it, Hebrews 12:5-11.

Do not withhold discipline from a child; If you strike him with a rod, he does not die. Strike him with a rod and deliver his being from She’ol, Proverbs 23:13-14.

As many as I love, I reprove and discipline. So be ardent and repent, Revelations 3:19.

Attitude should certainly be the focus for parents in training their children. If a child has an attitude of arrogance, anger, or selfishness then he knows he is doing wrong. Such attitudes NOT made subject to corrective discipline is much worse than incurring a serious accident. For example: a boy trying to hit his brother and missing him is definitely a more serious problem than a child giving his brother a bloody nose accidentally because he gestured with his hand while talking. The latter may need some small correction for carelessness. But the former is a problem requiring disciplinary attention from both parents.

Rules can certainly be made about attitude. Perhaps those would be the only rules we would need if we were wise enough. If we had the right attitude, we would obey all Yahweh’s commandments, statutes and judgements.

Emphasis on attitude is important for our children for another reason. If we insist that they are responsible not only for their actions but also for their attitudes, then they will come to know that they can control their attitude at any time. What a great gift that is! Help the child to know they have the ability to control how they feel, no matter what happens to them or around them.

Parents who take their position as parents seriously, will want to praise their child lavishly. It is a principle of human behavior, that “You get more of the right behavior you reward.” It’s a good idea to pick out a good characteristic of each child and make sure he always knows that he excels and is wonderful in that one way.

What behavior do you want to reward? Not good grades, but diligent study and learning the how and why of things; not getting a high-paying job, but working hard ... striving for quality, and serving others; not having a lot of rich friends, but choosing friends wisely and interacting properly with them; not winning, but helping others to win. Praise your child’s goodness and respect to others and his/her diligent efforts, not just the results of jobs well done.

If effort is the criteria and love in accordance with Yahweh’s perfect law is the standard, then every child (or adult) has an equal chance to excel and gain rewards and praise.

The following good counsel was given by Elder Voy Wilks (deceased), founder of Assembly of Yahweh (7th Day), he wrote: “Assure your children that you are not going to treat them all alike. Because of circumstances it is impossible to do so, even if you try. Also, every child is different so you should not treat them all alike. This is not to say that you are to make one feel wanted and another unwanted. No, do different things for different children. Teach your children to rejoice when a brother, a sister, or a friend receives a treasured gift or a blessing. Start this when your children are young and you and your children will receive the rewards for many years to come. To rejoice with others brings added happiness to ourselves as well as to others.”

But if you have bitter jealousy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast against and lie against the truth. This is not the wisdom coming down from above, but it is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and self-seeking are, there is confusion and every foul deed, James 3:14-16.

Even a child is known by his deeds, whether his work is clear and right, Proverbs 20:11.

To reiterate, good parents lavishly praise their child’s goodness and respect to others and his/her diligent efforts. Moreover, good parents shower their children with so much love and care that they will never doubt that they are personally loved. This may be the most essential thing we need to know about raising children.

So, make sure that you, as parents, have rules which you follow in your family. Once again, let the focus be on attitude – yours, and your children’s.

One illustration of exemplary child-rearing is shown in Job 31:16-22, **NKJV**:

If I have withheld the poor from [their] desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my bit alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it, for from my youth he grew up with me, as [with] a father, and from my mother’s womb I guided her; if I have seen any perish for lack of clothing, or there was no covering for the needy; if his loins have not blessed me, and he warmed himself with the fleece of my flock; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless when I watched over my help in the gate; [then] let my arm fall from the shoulder blade, and let my arm be broken from the elbow.

Job’s parents raised him to show love and compassion. Little wonder, that Yahweh was able to hold him up as an example of a perfect and upright man.

Parents should be consistent with their children. If you make a rule, then enforce it swiftly and consistently. If you can’t enforce it, then change the rule to one which you can, and will, enforce. It is much better for the child not to have a rule than to be allowed to break rules without penalty. No child was ever spoiled by being loved too much. What spoils children is the lack of strictly enforced adherence to high standards. When you hear a parent saying the third time, “I’m not going to tell you again, Johnny,” you are seeing a child being spoiled. Such a parent is actually training their child to disobey!

Elder Voy Wilks also said, “Teach your children that we, as saints, are supposed to be different from other people. This will help them to overcome any uneasiness about observing the Sabbath and the feast days, and their disappointment at missing out on school sports, trips, etc., which are usually planned for weekends.”

Whoever therefore intends to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of Elohim, James 4:4.

The Next Generation

Children’s children are the crown of old men, And the adornment of children is their fathers, Proverbs 17:6

One of the most critical parts of bringing up a child is making sure they marry the right person. This is not to say that there is only one right person for each of us. Actually, we could have a successful and rewarding marriage with any one of many people, but we cannot have such a marriage with just anyone who looks good. We must be careful.

Several Scriptures speak about whom we may not marry. For example, Deuteronomy 7:3-4 says that the heathen people of the land of Canaan were not suitable mates for the children of Israel. *For they will turn away your son from following Me that they may serve other elohim: so will the anger of Yahweh be kindled against you and He will destroy you quickly.*

The same idea is expressed in Genesis 24:3, 28:1, Joshua 23:12-13, Ezra 9:12, and Nehemiah 13:25. 2 Corinthians 6:14 warns us, *Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness? And what fellowship has light with darkness?*

Similar beliefs – having the same mind, speech, and judgment in spiritual matters – is important to a marriage. Yet there are still other things to also consider.

Preparation for marrying a very special person is hard work. A good marriage includes a match of intelligence, family background, sense of humor and other characteristics. It does not generally include physical appearance. Having a goal makes the search easier and faster.

Your child knowing early in life the type of person he/she will marry is a great encouragement as he/she prepares him/herself to meet and marry. In order to keep your children from entering a union with their eyes closed, encourage them to take a personality assessment, such as the “Prepare and Enrich” pre-marital counseling program used by Yahweh’s Assembly in Yahshua, that will aid them in profiling their own unique characteristics and those also of the one with whom they anticipate betrothal.

When a young person is dreaming about the ‘love of their life’, they should be encouraged to use this or any other reputable assessment tool as a basis for useful, intelligent, and productive planning and finding their ideal mate possessing acceptable values. A personality profile assessment tool will help both to determine compatibility and identify areas of mutual concern.

Parents, pray with your children that the heavenly Father will guide and lead them to a mate who will be good for them and for their children, your grandchildren. Urge your child to keep praying for their mate after they are married, too. You want an in-law and grandchildren you can easily love.

Before that time, however, and while your children are yet under your tutelage, monitor their choice of friends. Your daughter could end up marrying one of your son’s friends.

Commandments to Children

Come, you children, listen to me; let me teach you the fear of Yahweh, Psalms 34:11

I write to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of His Name. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. I wrote to you, fathers, because you have known Him from the beginning. I wrote to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of Elohim stays in you, and you have overcome the wicked one, 1 John 2:12-14.

Besides the many commandments, statutes and judgements which we all must do or refrain from doing, there are quite a few rules especially for us in our role as children:

How would a young man cleanse his path? To guard it according to Your Word, Psalms 119:9.

Honor your father and your mother, as Yahweh your Elohim has commanded you, so that your days are prolonged, and so that it is well with you on the soil which Yahweh your Elohim is giving you, Deuteronomy 5:16.

For Elohim has commanded, saying, "Honor your father and your mother; he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death," Matthew 15:4.

Children, obey your parents in the Master, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first command with promise, in order that it might be well with you, and you might live long on the earth. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children, but bring them up in the instruction and admonition of the Master, Ephesians 6:1-4.

You know the commands, "Do not commit adultery; Do not murder; Do not steal; Do not bear false witness; Do not rob; Honor your father and your mother," Mark 10:19.

My son, heed the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the Torah of your mother; for they are a fair wreath on your head, and chains about your neck, Proverbs 1:8-9.

Children, listen to the discipline of a father, and give attention to know understanding; for I gave you good instruction: do not forsake my Torah, Proverbs 4:1-2.

Hear, my son, and accept my words, and let the years of your life be many. I have taught you in the way of wisdom, I have led you in straight paths, Proverbs 4:10-11.

My son, attend to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them at the center of your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh, Proverbs 4:20-22.

My son, watch over your father's command, and do not forsake the Torah of your mother. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. When you are walking about, it leads you; when you lie down, it guards you. And when you have awakened, it talks to you. For the command is a lamp, and the Torah a light, and reproofs of discipline a way of life, Proverbs 6:20-23.

And now, listen to me, you children, for blessed are they who guard my ways. Listen to discipline and become wise, and do not refuse it, Proverbs 8:32-33.

To older children, we have these words:

Listen to your father who brought you forth, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth and do not sell it – wisdom and discipline and understanding. The father of the righteous greatly rejoices, and he who brings forth a wise one delights in him. Let your father and your mother rejoice, and let her who bore you exult, Proverbs 23:22-25.

Rise up before the grey-headed. And you shall favor the face of an old man, and shall fear your Elohim. I am Yahweh, Leviticus 19:32.

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come ... Ecclesiastes 12:1a.

Let no one look down on your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in spirit, in belief, in cleanliness, 1 Timothy 4:12.

And flee from the lusts of youth, but pursue righteousness, belief, love, peace with those calling on the Master out of a clean heart, 2 Timothy 2:22.

Likewise urge the young men to be sensible, Titus 2:6.

The counsel of king David to his son, Solomon:

And the days of David drew near to die, and he commanded Solomon, his son, saying, "I am going the way of all the earth. And you shall be strong, and be a man. And guard the Charge o Yahweh your Elohim: to walk in His ways, to guard His laws, His commands, His right-rulings, and His witnesses, as it is written in the Torah of Moses, so that you do wisely all that you do and wherever you turn; so that Yahweh does establish His word which He spoke concerning me,

saying, 'If your sons guard their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their being,' saying, 'there is not to cease a man of yours on the throne of Israel'," 1 Kings 2:1-4.

As for you, my son, Solomon, know the Elohim of your father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a pleasing life, for Yahweh searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you do seek Him, He is found by you; but if you forsake Him, He rejects you forever, 1 Chronicles 28:9.

Last words, and a marvelous prayer for an adult son from a dying father.

Goal Setting for the Family

Serendipity is when we find something good for which we weren't even looking. It is wonderful when that happens, but it doesn't happen often enough to be thought as something naturally occurring. You certainly shouldn't stake your future on it.

The Scriptures don't contain much detailed information about goal setting, or goal reaching, except for that one great, all-important goal: salvation and admittance into the Kingdom. Experts generally agree, that goal setting is the most powerful force for consistent human motivation.

Setting goals begin with the end in mind. You wouldn't board a plane without knowing where it was headed, when it would arrive, or how much the trip would cost you. But most people live their lives with uncertainties. As might be expected, many end up where they didn't want to be, and pay a price which they can't afford. As the proverb says, "Where *there is* no vision, the people perish ..." (Prov. 29:18a, **KJV**)

Yahweh set a goal in Eden, and put a plan into effect over a period of many centuries. Yahshua knew the plan and the Apostle John recorded the following exchange of the Master:

Then Pilate said to Him, "You are a sovereign, then?" Yahshua answered, "You say it, because I am a sovereign. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice," John 18:37.

Paul also spoke of this great plan in Romans 14:9, where he asserted, to this end, Messiah, died, was risen, and lived again, that He might be Master both of the dead and the living.

People who are the most successful, make the long-range plans. The least successful are they who wonder how they can achieve and provide for the lusts and affections of their flesh. Some few set their life's goals, clearly expecting their accomplishment over a period of many decades.

Families which set goals have a standard against which to judge their actions. With every potential life-changing experience, they ask, "Will this move us toward our goals or away from them?" If we have no well-defined goals then our decisions will be plagued by uncertainty, delay, and failure.

How to Set Goals

The procedure for setting goals is the same for an individual, a family, or a large corporation. If you are in a position where you cannot set goals in a family context because your family is not yet of the same mind or judgment, or you are not yet married, then set goals by yourself, for yourself. If unmarried, you can certainly have objectives in mind for your eventual marriage and the family that is created of your marriage.

Here are the steps for goal setting:

- **Ask for guidance:** This is most important. You need the best counsel you can obtain. Ask your Heavenly Father. Yahweh wants to hear His children asking for help in walking in the right way. He wants to give favorable answers to those prayers. Begin by thanking Him for His past guidance, and for His Set-Apart Spirit that has guided you into all Truth, and showed you things to come.

Thank Him for your family members whom you commit to Him, and from Whom you solicit their guidance, protection, and support. Ask Him to keep all your goals in accord with His righteous ways.

Consider asking for counsel from older married people who are established in wisdom and understanding, and whom you respect. *Without counsel, plans go wrong, but by great counsellors they are established*, Proverbs 15:22.

Be sure to ask and include in the entire process all those who are involved and affected. Children may surprise you with their good contributions if you listen.

- **Establish your foundation principles:** Get a sturdy notebook. Write down all the things on which you and your family agree. These are the things which make up the personality of your family. Include statements about your beliefs and attitudes toward these areas that affect family life: spiritual; finances; health; home life; social life; educational pursuits.

To stimulate thinking, ask yourselves questions like: What is important in this area? What is the key? Why is this area of interest to us? What do we know about it? Do most people believe that it's right? What would Yahshua say? How does this relate to other areas? You will also want to review the Scriptures related to your considerations, appreciating above all, that Yahweh's ways are good for your family.

Don't feel that the list must be 'frozen' at any time. As you grow in knowledge and as your family grows and changes, different beliefs will become important to you. When something becomes important which used to be taken for granted, then be sure to take note of it. Once the lists are made, put a number in front of each item in pencil showing how important that belief is compared to the others.

We assume a harmonious family setting, but the procedure is similar for individuals or for families in which conditions are not ideal.

- **Set long-term goals:** Turning principles into long-term goals is a task which can be real fun because you get to dream together. Anything suggested by one of your beliefs or in accordance with those beliefs can become a long-term goal. These are statements which outline the essential mission and basic, long-term directions for the family. Long-term goals will be general statements similar to, "We will study Yahweh's ways and apply them to our daily life."
- **Set short-term goals:** Developing short-term goals from your long-term goals requires more work. Each long-term goal should be represented by goals which are smaller in scope, more specific, and which will move the family toward the long-term goal. Consider setting goals which are tangible and goals which are intangible (which just means it is something you can't touch, like love).

Some of your goals may involve obtaining things that will improve the quality of family life, while other goals aspire toward the family becoming more cohesive and in agreement.

One of the short-term goals might be: Before next spring we will read the books of Yahweh's Law, together and list those ordinances which most closely apply to us.

Each long-term goal may incorporate one or more short-term goals – whatever it takes to accomplish the long-term goal.

- **Develop a plan of action:** A plan of action for a goal means you must break the short-term goal into the tasks needed to get it accomplished. This is usually straight-forward. For example: If before next spring we will read the books of Yahweh's Law, together, then we will read two chapters of Exodus thru Deuteronomy each evening plus four chapters each Sabbath. All will discuss and 'Terry' will list those ordinances which most closely apply to us. Time required - 1 hour per day.

While ‘Terry’ may be assigned this task one week of evenings, or one Sabbath, a family could also divide up the work for each family member. Consider possibilities like that.

NOTE WELL: Achievement of any goal may require of you or another family member, the task of becoming something different from what you, or the other, now are. A goal to become something usually means taking concrete, physical actions. For instance, on a personal level, if your goal was to come closer in relationship to Yahweh, you could take the concrete steps of studying how Yahshua stayed close to Him, allowing a certain time each day for prayer and meditation, and spending time with people whom you know are close to Him. On the other hand, if your goal is to drive a new Mercedes in five years, you may need to learn how to earn more, and how to buy a car.

- **Count the cost:** In deciding if the goal is ‘worth it’, you must weigh the cost (the time and effort it will take to accomplish it) against the rewards (what are the benefits for our family and others if we accomplish this goal). You must also weigh the cost against the resources you have or can get (Luke 14:28-30).

In the case of the task of reading Yahweh’s Law, the analysis might cost: one-fourth of all our evenings; some missed school work; some missed ‘favorite’ TV shows;

On the other hand, reading Yahweh’s Law will provide benefits: increased knowledge of the Law; increased knowledge of Scripture; doing something important together as a family.

At this point you must weigh the cost against the benefits and decide if this goal is right for your family. You can decide it is; or it isn’t; or it needs restructuring; or maybe, it should be deferred until later. You may even want to decide that part of the family will work toward this goal and part of the family won’t. The choice is yours. If the goal is related to one of your most important beliefs, then that should appear in the benefits.

- **Develop desire and confidence:** Actually, this is nearly achieved when you make that decision that the reward is worth the cost. You may wish to find pictures of a family enjoying similar rewards or make small signs with sayings to keep your enthusiasm up. For example, a sign might say: “The truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).
- **Work the plan:** Now that you’ve planned the work, and all of your short-term goals have been set, you can schedule the tasks from the various goals into your daily or weekly routine. Don’t schedule yourself out of ordinary life. Relinquish time-wasters (TV, or surfing the internet, or exercising your thumb or forefinger on your smart phone).

Schedule the things which will move the family toward the most important goals. You may have to defer working on other goals until later. Remember, you have a lifetime to achieve your goals. In fact, it might be advisable to set goals to be accomplished by the family in the years after some members are no longer expected to be with your family. A magnificent goal may require decades into the future for its fulfillment, e.g., in one hundred years your family could establish philanthropic gift to a university, a loving orphanage, or a great zoo.

Part of achieving goals is recording the accomplishments and accepting the rewards. Make a big thing of it. Thank Yahweh together. Acknowledge the work of each individual. If it is a goal which benefits others primarily, be sure there is also ‘something in it for those who did the work’.

Conclusion: For Your Daily Attention

Every good craftsman knows that his tools are a key to his success. He sharpens his tools every day. There are several areas which require daily attention:

Physical – each family member’s health;

Mental – development of knowledge and attitudes;

Emotional / Social – building worthwhile relationships inside and outside the family. Show your love every day to each one;

Spiritual – the most important relationship.

Strive for continuous improvement of your family. Make it better each year than it was the previous year.

IN YOUR FAMILY – Let love be without hypocrisy. Shrink from what is wicked, cling to what is good. In brotherly love, tenderly loving towards one another, in appreciation, giving preference to each other; not idle in duty, ardent in spirit, serving the Master; rejoicing in the expectancy, enduring under pressure, continuing steadfastly in prayer; imparting to the needs of the set-apart ones, pursuing kindness towards strangers. Bless those who persecute you – bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not be proud in mind, but go along with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Repay no one evil for evil. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, on your part, be at peace with all men. ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good, Romans 12:9-18, 21.

And Now, a Blessing

To sum up, let all of you be like-minded, sympathetic, loving as brothers, tenderhearted, humble-minded, not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, in order to inherit a blessing. For he who wishes to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit, let him turn away from evil and do good, let him seek peace and pursue it. Because the eyes of Yahweh are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers, but the face of Yahweh is against those who do evil, 1 Peter 3:8-12.

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