

## GOD COMES FIRST IN SUCCESSFUL FAMILY LIFE

### *Note to the speaker:*

Stress that Jehovah, the Creator of the marriage arrangement, logically is the one families should consult for direction. Reason on how a successful family life can be achieved by following Bible principles

### **THE FAMILY IS AN ARRANGEMENT AUTHORIZED BY JEHOVAH** (8 min.)

Jehovah God originated marriage, performed first human wedding (Ge 2:22-24; *it-2* 340)

A basic purpose: reproduce members of human family (Ge 1:27, 28)

Childbearing required organizing of family circle

Formed also a permanent bond of union between man and woman

Closest of human relationships; would be mutually helpful to each mate, a source of great happiness (Mt 19:4-6)

Marriage was normal way of life among Hebrews; no word for “bachelor” in Hebrew Scriptures

Children viewed as blessing; through childbearing, Israel became great and populous nation

Marriage “honorable” among early Christians (Heb 13:4)

Preaching—not childbearing—main Christian commission

Yet, Jehovah showed continuing interest in family by providing counsel for Christian husbands, wives, and children

### **MUST PUT GOD FIRST IN FAMILY LIFE** (12 min.)

God interested in family life of worshipers today

Invites Christian husband and wife to make secure “threefold cord” by including him in their marriage (Ec 4:12)

Similarly interested in welfare of single-parent households (1Ti 5:5)

To receive God’s blessing, must put him first (Ps 127:1)

What putting God first in family means (*w81* 7/1 12-17)

Means being concerned about measuring up to God’s requirements for family members

Practicing kindness and unselfish love is among these requirements (Eph 4:32)

Husband: greater responsibility; should set example and work to encourage wife (Eph 5:28-32)

Many ways to show affection besides saying “I love you”

Express appreciation for wife’s work (Pr 31:28)

Place interests of wife ahead of your own (Php 2:4)

Seek to give, not take (Ac 20:35)

Wife: develop heartfelt submission (1Pe 3:1-6)

Be industrious, trustworthy (Pr 31:10-27)

Children: showing respect for and obedience to parents a divine requirement (Col 3:20)

Putting God first also means having warm, personal relationship with him, giving him pleasure, making his heart glad (Pr 27:11)

Includes gaining experience from God’s Word, keeping spiritual things first (Ps 19:7)

### **KEEPING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN** (10 min.)

Real communication helps families unitedly put God first

Means more than just talking (1Co 14:9; *fl* chap. 11)

Good husband ‘dwells with wife according to knowledge,’ using godly wisdom in exercise of headship (1Pe 3:7)

No family agrees on everything; must learn to accept differences, put up with minor weaknesses (Col 3:13)

Encourage children to be expressive; seek to understand their needs

If parents guard against stifling free expression, can learn much as to children’s needs (*fl* 149)

When communicating counsel and direction to children, make plain that standards are based on God’s Word (Ps 119:105)

Help child learn that greater responsibility goes with greater freedom; more responsibility shown, greater trust (Lu 12:48)

Even if child rebels, keep way open for return; love hopes for best (1Co 13:7)

### **COMMUNICATING WITH JEHOVAH GOD REGULARLY** (10 min.)

Regular family prayer helps keep God first in family; Christian husband takes the lead in this

Wife and children also need to pray for help and guidance

Following Jesus’ model, avoid repetition; let prayers fit occasion (Mt 6:9-13)

When is prayer appropriate?

Pray when in a provoked state (Eph 4:26, 27)

Prayer has healing effect as we seek to forgive others (Jas 5:16)

Pray at mealtimes and nightly before retiring

Heartfelt prayer reflects personal relationship with Jehovah

Mealtime: specific, brief; not rambling, incoherent

End of day: husband should recognize things that arose during day, cover points of concern

Proper subjects for prayer (*it-2* 668-70)

Anything that affects relationship with God (1Jo 5:14)

May ask for direction in maintaining balanced single life or in finding a mate

If married, can prayerfully consider question of having children or seek wisdom in rearing them

God promises to give needed insight (Ps 32:8)

When not sure what to pray for, God's spirit will help (Ro 8:26, 27; *it-2* 405, 670)

**KEEP GOD FIRST AS WHOLE FAMILY SHARES IN REGULAR SACRED SERVICE** (5 min.)

Rendering sacred service helps to fulfill family's present purpose: serving God in faithfulness

Means keeping busy in God's service, study, meeting preparation and participation

Husband should take lead; family more readily yields to his authority

Women who are single parents must also take lead

Those in divided homes should likewise strive to put God first

May result in uniting family (*yb93* 9; *w93* 8/15 6-7)

Praise goes to Jehovah, and blessings come to all of us when we put God first in family life

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read)