

COMMUNICATION—WITHIN THE FAMILY AND WITH GOD

Note to the speaker:

Source material for this outline can be found in chapters 6, 9, 14-16 of the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*. Do *not*, however, read to the audience directly from the book. Keep your information fresh and up-to-date by the use of additional, more recent material. Open the Bible frequently, and read directly from it as your authority

PARENTS, KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN WITH YOUR CHILDREN (12 min.)

What is communication? (1Co 14:9)

The teen years can be a time of crisis in communication

The groundwork for good or bad communication is laid from infancy onward when conversing is either encouraged or inhibited (*w88* 8/1 11-12; *w85* 8/15 22-3)

Know the needs of teenagers in order to cultivate communication

Especially at this age, they need to be understood and respected as individuals

Important to them to feel needed and appreciated (*g88* 9/8 9-10)

Have need for more independence, which involves a lessening of some restrictions

Feel strong need for friends their own age outside the family

To communicate counsel, be sure you understand the situation (*w86* 11/1 23)

For youths to have feeling of individual worth and of belonging, work is valuable (Ga 6:4; Tit 3:14; *g88* 9/8 9-10; *g83* 2/8 9-10)

Communicate to youths the Bible's moral code as a guide (Ps 119:9, 63; *w88* 5/1 6; *g83* 2/8 10)

CHILDREN, COMMUNICATE WITH AND HONOR YOUR PARENTS (10 min.)

God commands that parents be honored (Eph 6:2, 3)

Why should children want to do so? (*yp* 11-17, 42-9)

Children should want to communicate with their parents to gain wisdom

From their own experience, children know wisdom comes with the passing of time

Knowing this, and knowing that their parents are much older, children should appreciate the greater wisdom their parents have (Pr 23:22)

Learn to accept authority of stepparent (*yp* 45-9)

Children can learn in a one-parent household too (*g90* 7/8 20-2)

Parents are honored and made happy when children help around the home, and communication is enhanced

There is responsibility to care for parents as they grow old (*w87* 6/1 13-18)

Honoring parents includes caring for them materially if that is necessary (Mt 15:1-6)

Emotional and spiritual needs are also to be provided for

MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE AFTER THEY ARE OLDER AND THEIR CHILDREN NOT WITH THEM (10 min.)

After children are grown and have left the home, conditions may arise that jeopardize the closeness of the father and the mother

There is danger of restlessness and boredom because children are gone and there is less work to do

With aging, physical changes occur; some older ones try to become very active socially to prove that they are as young as ever

Some endeavor to prove that they are still potent sexually, get involved in extramarital affairs, and sometimes even divorce and remarry (Mal 2:13-16; *g86* 7/8 8-9; *g83* 2/22 8-10)

There are many blessings from loyally staying together (*g83* 2/8 11-12)

Engage in enjoyable activities that can make your life useful in the later years—helping others, serving God, having spiritual children (2Co 6:11, 12; 1Th 2:19, 20; Heb 13:16; Jas 1:27; *g83* 2/22 10-12)

KEEP IN COMMUNICATION WITH GOD FOR YOUR FAMILY'S ETERNAL WELFARE (8 min.)

As time passes, do not live in the past but rather look to the future

What are the prospects?

For many, the future seems to hold a few short years, then death

For those with faith in God and who serve him, the future means eternal life

By means of ransom, God's original purpose for putting mankind on earth will be fulfilled

Life on a paradise earth, peace, no sickness, no death (Mic 4:3, 4; Re 21:1-5)

What do families need to do now to have these blessings?

Study God's Word, the Bible, individually and as a family (*w86* 11/1 25-6)

Live in accord with Jehovah's will, and tell others of the blessings of Christ's Kingdom

Imagine what blessings on a paradise earth there will be for those families who communicate with God and do his will forever

FAMILY COMMUNICATION LEADS TO HAPPINESS AND GOD'S APPROVAL (5 min.)

Families cannot communicate if they do not spend time together

Head of the family must arrange this time for communication

Thought should be given to upbuilding conversation (*sg* 78-80)

Goal should be for family to have meals together

There should be a regular family Bible study (*w*86 11/1 25)

Families should attend meetings and sit together; also enjoy service together

There should be regular family recreation and outings (*Ec* 3:1, 4)

We cannot have God's approval if we do not communicate with him

Jehovah invites us to communicate, to pray regularly (*Ps* 65:2; *Jas* 4:8)

Communication is the formula for good relations with others: parents, children, husbands, wives, people in general, and God

It behooves all of us to become skilled communicators and to keep communicating

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