

# DEEPER

## Daily Bible Study

Adult Sabbath School Lesson  
Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

### Keys to Family Unity

2019, Quarter 2, Lesson 7

#### Sabbath (May 11): Keys to Family Unity

Sin causes disunity. It causes disunity between the individual sinner and God (Isaiah 59:1), and it causes discord between people, as well. This sad reality was demonstrated moments after Adam and Eve first sinned, as Adam blamed his wife, and then God, for his mistake (Genesis 3:11,12). This week's lesson looks at the key to restoring true unity within families, and, by extension, the church that is made up of those families.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read John 17:21. According to Christ, what is a primary purpose for unity among Christians? (That the world may believe that the Father sent Jesus Christ.) Does this guarantee that the world will believe? (No.) For what reasons, then, do you think God has connected the world's acceptance of Christ with unity among Christians? (Answers will vary.)
- Read John 17:22,26. Jesus says that God's glory and love will be in His disciples. What role do these play in convincing the world that God sent Jesus Christ? (True love is naturally absent from the fallen human heart. A demonstration of this in the lives of people provides convincing proof that a supernatural power is at work in their lives. God's glory is His character [see Exodus 33:18,19], and this too is naturally absent from the sinful heart and life. When the fruits of the Spirit and the character of God are present in a person, or in a church, this, too, is evidence that a divine power is at work.)
- Read the statement below from the book *Adventist Home*, and then discuss in what ways the mission of the Christian family is the same as that of the church, and in what ways it may be different:

The mission of the home extends beyond its own members. The Christian home is to be an object lesson, illustrating the excellence of the true principles of life. Such an illustration will be a power for good in the world.... As the youth go out from such a home, the lessons they have learned are imparted. Nobler principles of life are introduced into other households, and an uplifting influence works in the community (AH 31).

#### Sunday (May 12): Christ the Center

Ultimately, only one Source can provide true unity within a family or church, and that is Jesus Christ. Consider this statement from the book *Adventist Home*:

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The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ (AH 179).

### Discussion Questions:

- Read Ephesians 2:13,14. What are some of the walls that frequently divide family members from each other? Be as specific as is appropriate. (Answers might include interests and lifestyle choices, jealousy, resentment, fear, selfishness, hidden sins, education, economic status, and religion.) In what ways are these things the same or different from issues that divide the church? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Galatians 3:26,27. What does it mean to “put on Christ?” (To put on Christ is to accept His principles, His authority, and His character in our lives. It also means that we accept His power to subdue, soften, and change those aspects of our characters and lives that do not please Him.) In what specific ways might “putting on Christ” change how a family operates? (Examples might include making family worship a priority, shutting off the television or putting away other media in order to spend more time with the family, reconsidering how spare money and vacation time is spent, using Sabbath afternoons differently, etc.)
- Read Romans 13:14. In what practical ways will “putting on Christ” manifest itself in the personal life of each family member? (Much of what we do every day is to satisfy some kind of lust—whether lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. When Christ truly becomes supreme in our life, He will lead us step by step away from the natural tendency to gratify these desires and “needs” in our lives, and to focus instead on Him and the people around us.)

## Monday (May 13): Becoming One Through His Love

Jesus said shortly before His death, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). Truly, it is the love of God that draws people to Him, and then, as a result, to each other. But this kind of love is very different from the “love” that many people think of when they use that word. In English, at least, people use the word *love* in many different situations—for example, to express commitment to a spouse of many decades, to describe excitement for a job or sports game, or to say how much one likes a favorite food. Clearly, the word *love* does not mean the same thing in every situation. What does the word *love* mean for the Christian, for the Christian family, and for the church?

### Discussion Questions:

- Read John 15:13. What does this verse reveal about true love? (This *agape*, or selfless love, is focused on the welfare and benefit of others, not self-centered.) Although some people do make this ultimate sacrifice and die for others, most of us are not called to do this. In what ways can family members demonstrate this kind of love to each other on a daily basis? (Answers will vary.)
- Read 1 Thessalonians 3:12. Where does true *agape* love come from? (It comes from God.) What does it mean that this love should “abound” in our families, and how is this

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mindset different from that of the natural-born person? (Naturally, most of us will do the minimum “required” to get along with others, whether they are members of our family or not. *Agape* love leads us to do the most possible for others, not the least.) What are some specific examples in ordinary family life where doing “the most possible” for each would make a huge difference in the spiritual life of a family? (Answers will vary.)

### Tuesday (May 14): Selfishness: Family Destroyer

Lucifer in heaven first displayed selfishness as sin built in his heart (Isaiah 14:12-14), and it has plagued humanity ever since sin entered this world. Fortunately, Christ’s love has the power to break the chains of selfishness, as well as all other manifestations of sin.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read Philippians 2:5-8. What aspects of true love and selflessness are brought out in this verse, and how can they apply specifically to families? (Possible answers include not being jealous or envious of family members, parents or older siblings not exercising their authority or age in ways that are unhealthy or harmful to other family members, placing ourselves “in someone else’s shoes” when trying to solve a disagreement, and sacrificially giving of our time, money, energy, or other resources to help and encourage other family members.)
- Read the statements below from the book *Adventist Home* and then discuss what keys they reveal about what will prevent selfishness from ruling the family and home:

You need the subduing grace of God in your heart. Do not desire a life of ease and inactivity. All who are connected with the Lord's work must be constantly on guard against selfishness. Keep your lamp trimmed and burning. Then you will not be reckless of your words and actions. You will both be happy if you try to please each other. Keep the windows of the soul closed earthward and opened heavenward (AH 96).

Too many cares and burdens are brought into our families, and too little of natural simplicity and peace and happiness is cherished. There should be less care for what the outside world will say and more thoughtful attention to the members of the family circle. There should be less display and affectation of worldly politeness, and much more tenderness and love, cheerfulness and Christian courtesy, among the members of the household. Many need to learn how to make home attractive, a place of enjoyment. Thankful hearts and kind looks are more valuable than wealth and luxury, and contentment with simple things will make home happy if love be there (AH 108,109).

Constant, self-denying benevolence is God's remedy for the cankering sins of selfishness and covetousness. God has arranged systematic benevolence to sustain His cause and relieve the necessities of the suffering and needy. He has ordained that giving should become a habit, that it may counteract the dangerous and deceitful sin of covetousness. Continual giving starves covetousness to death. Systematic benevolence is designed in the order of God to tear away treasures from the covetous as fast as they are gained, and to consecrate them to the Lord, to whom they belong (AH 370).

### Wednesday (May 15): Submission

Submission runs contrary to our fallen human nature, yet the Bible indicates that voluntary submission among family members is an important key to family unity. While all members of a

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family, or a church, are called to submit “one to another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21), the Bible also highlights specific aspects of submission within a healthy and God-fearing family.

### Discussion Questions:

- Read Ephesians 5:22. What reason for the submission of the wife to the husband is here given? (Her submission to the husband should be “as unto the Lord.” “The wife should see in her relation to her husband a reflection, or illustration, of her relation to Christ” [*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1036].)
- Read Genesis 3:16. Upon what does Paul base his command to women in Ephesians 5:22? (He is re-stating the social order that God made clear in the Garden of Eden.)

Paul ascribes to women a position of subordination in relation to their husbands (cf. 1 Peter 3:1-6). The ethics of Christian relationships within the family are clear when once it is seen that difference and subordination do not in any sense imply inferiority. The submission enjoined upon the wife is of the kind that can be given only between equals, not a servile obedience, but a voluntary submission in the respects in which the man was qualified by his Maker to be head (cf. Gen. 3:16). Every community must, for purposes of organization and existence, have a head. Even in our free age of insistence on the equality of men and women, the man who does not assume the leadership of his family in love is regarded with something akin to contempt by men and women alike. This principle of submission is permanent, but its specific application may vary from age to age according to custom and social consciousness. Compare 1 Cor. 11:3, 7-9; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Titus 2:5 (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1036).

- Read Ephesians 5:25. In what way should husbands submit to their wives? (Husbands are called to care for, protect, and sacrifice for their wives, much as Christ sacrificed Himself for the church. At times this will require the submission of the husband’s will to the needs of his wife.)
- Read Ephesians 6:1. What reason for the submission of children to the parents is here given? (Children should obey their parents in the Lord, “for this is right.”)
- Read Ephesians 6:4. In what way should parents submit to their children? (A loving parent will not abuse their power and authority over their children, but will consider their children’s needs and abilities and submit their own will, at times, to that of their children.)

## Thursday (May 16): Living the Love We Promise

Commitment is essential for building and maintaining a healthy family. Much can be learned about how to remain committed to our spouse or family members from the Bible’s advice on how to stay committed to God.

### Discussion Questions:

- Read Ephesians 6:10-13. What must we understand and remember about the forces working against family unity and commitment? (Unseen spiritual powers of darkness are constantly at work to destroy family unity and our commitment to each other.) Who alone can help us in this battle for our families? (The Lord, and the power of His might.)
- Read Ephesians 6:14. How might the “belt of truth” and “breastplate of righteousness” apply to family unity and family strength today? (Answers will vary. We must be committed to honesty and integrity with the members of our families. The breastplate

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covers the heart, and we must be committed not to allow into our heart anything—including other relationships—that does not pass the test of righteousness.)

- Read Ephesians 6:15. How might the “feet shod with the gospel of peace” apply to family unity and our commitment to each other? (Answers will vary. The gospel communicates God’s forgiveness of our sins, and His grace to give us another chance when we fail. Family members must be prepared to extend forgiveness and grace to each other as well.)
- Read Ephesians 6:16,17. What lessons might the “shield of faith” and the “helmet of salvation” hold for Christian families today? (Answers will vary. The helmet of salvation protects the head, and could refer to a commitment to watch or listen to nothing that would weaken our commitment to our spouse and/or children.)
- Read Ephesians 6:18. What indispensable aspect of prayer is essential for strong families? (Family members need to pray and intercede for each other.)
- Read John 14:15. What alone will ensure that we remain loyal to God? (Love for Him.) What does this imply about commitment among family members? (Ultimately, only love for each other will guarantee true loyalty and commitment.)

### Friday (May 17): Results of Family Unity

Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are “the issues of life”; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences (AH 15).

This opening statement from the book *Adventist Home* summarizes importance of the family, not only upon its own members, but also upon society at large, and, by extension, the entire world. In today’s lesson we will look at God’s purpose and plan for the family, and His desire for its influence upon the world, as illustrated through His promises to Abraham.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read Genesis 12:3. What promise did God give to Abram? (That “all families of the earth” [KJV] would be blessed through him.)
- Read the following statement from the SDA Bible Commentary, and then discuss the questions that follow:

The blessing vouchsafed to him [Abraham] would finally unite divided families on earth, and change the dread curse pronounced upon the ground because of sin into a blessing for all men. All further promises to the patriarchs and to Israel either clarified or amplified the promise of salvation offered the entire human race in the first promise made to Abram (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 294).

- Read Genesis 12:1. What did Abram have to do in order to receive God’s blessing? (Leave his country, kindred, and father’s house.) In what ways—either literally or spiritually—does God call families today to make a similar sacrifice? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Genesis 12:2. What four things does God promise Abram? (To make him a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, and that he would be a blessing.) Which blessing do you think Abram might have desired the most? Which of these blessings do I desire most? (Answers will vary.)

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- Read Galatians 3:8. In what way did God promise to bless all people through Abram's faith? (Abraham received justification by faith, a blessing that God wants to extend to all people, families, and nations, of earth.)
- Read Galatians 3:9. What is a great blessing that a faithful family—like Abraham—can share with others? (The example of living a faithful life.)