

# God's Word (the Bible) on Family Living



## SABBATH—JANUARY 7

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Exodus 20:12; Psalm 18:2; Song of Solomon; Isaiah 54:5; Isaiah 62:5; John 10:11; John 15:5; Ephesians 5:21-25.

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures [the Bible] gives us strength to go on. They cheer us up and give us hope" (Romans 15:4, NIV).

**VISITORS TO A SCIENCE THEATER RECEIVED 3-D EYEGLASSES.** In the dark room, the group saw beautiful nature scenes on a large screen. First they looked at the pictures without the glasses. Then they put the 3-D glasses on. When they did, a photo of an orchard in full bloom surprised the crowd. It seemed as if the branches stuck out from the screen over their heads. The same as these 3-D glasses, a different way of studying the Bible can help us see and understand old truths better. This week, we will put on family glasses to see how God teaches the truth about families and family living. This special study turns the Bible into a modern textbook for life in our homes and life in the church.

**A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** God shows us His plans and purposes for families in the Bible.

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 14.

**SUNDAY—JANUARY 8**

**FAMILY COMMANDMENTS  
(Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).**

One way the Bible gives its message on family life is through commands. Some of these commands speak about all relationships.<sup>1</sup> Some deal with neighborliness and friendship. Other commands are for husbands, wives, parents, and children.

**What commands are in the following verses for different kinds of relationships?**

Exodus 20:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Exodus 20:14 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Deuteronomy 6:6, 7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 5:18, 19 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:21-25 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:33 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 6:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

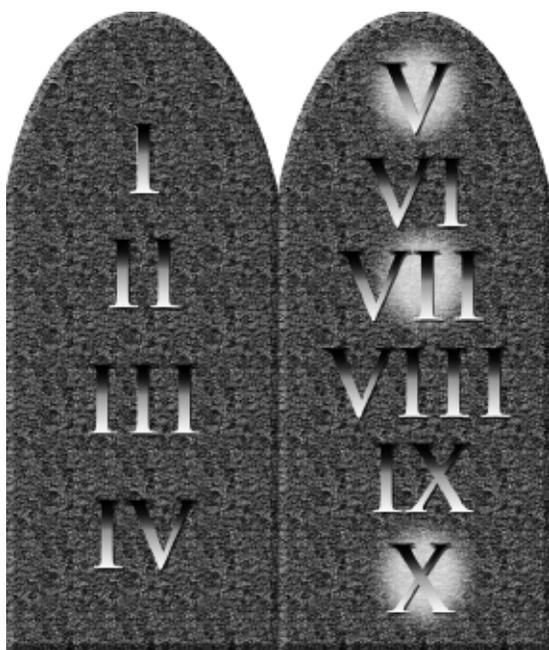
Colossians 3:20 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 3:7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Good marriages and parent-child relationships are important to God. Three of the Ten Commandments focus on family life: (1) "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12, NKJV); (2) "You shall not com-

<sup>1</sup>relationships—the connections we have with people.

mit adultery” (Exodus 20:14, NKJV); and (3) “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife” (Exodus 20:17, NKJV). Other commands deal with God’s hopes for marriage, parent-child relationships, and family life. There are also commands for general relationships, such as (1) “love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44), (2) “do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12, NIV), and (3) “love one another” (John 13:34). These commands also are for relationships at home.



Three of the Ten Commandments focus on family life.

**Go back over these commands and ask yourself: In which areas do I need to make changes? What must I do to make those changes?**

<sup>2</sup>famine—not having enough food.

## MONDAY—JANUARY 9

### FAMILY STORIES (Ruth 1 and 2).

Bible stories teach us about life. The stories show how people’s lives are the results of their choices. These stories also show how the people grew, even though they had disappointments and problems. Through these stories, we see how God watches over His people, even in difficult times.

#### What lessons can you learn about family living from Ruth 1 and 2?

The same as many families today, this Bible family was hit by life-changing losses. Famine,<sup>2</sup> moving to another country, death of a husband, and death of both sons set Naomi back. As the story opens, Naomi feels hopeless. She is angry with God, and alone. She cannot imagine that anyone cares. But, as the book of Ruth shows, family means faithful companionship. Family means helping one another in troubled times and caring for the helpless. Ruth is Naomi’s daughter-in-law. Ruth shows wonderful faith in God. She shows her faith by her loyalty and service to Naomi, who has been very depressed. Faced with unbelievable hardship, these two unlucky people finally get real help from a very rich relative. This relative is Boaz. Boaz fulfills his legal responsibility by marrying Ruth. But Boaz also loves Ruth. So this story also is

an example of God's everlasting<sup>3</sup> love. God does not rest until, like Boaz, He gets what He loves. The baby born to Boaz and Ruth softens painful memories. The baby gives joy for the present and hope for the future. Stories like these are in the Bible to teach, inspire, correct, and train God's people in right living (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16). We find ourselves in these stories. These stories show us we are not alone in temptation, struggles, and disappointments. The Bible's honesty about the weaknesses and mistakes of others shows us how to avoid mistakes. Also, we see good examples we want to copy for ourselves. God's long-suffering and patience inspire us with courage and hope. We know that God, who never changes, is with us also.

**What could you learn from the story of Ruth that can help you and your family through a bad time?**

## TUESDAY—JANUARY 10

### PRINCIPLES<sup>4</sup> OF RELATIONSHIPS (Proverbs 17:9).

Teachings about relationships also are found in the Bible's principles on relationships. The book of Proverbs has the greatest collection of principles about relationships.

**What principles do the following verses give about relationships?**

**How do you think the writer of these principles made his inspired conclusions?**

Proverbs 12:25\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 15:1\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 17:9\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 17:22\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Solomon wrote these verses. Because his capital, Jerusalem, sat right on the trade routes,<sup>5</sup> Solomon met people from many parts of the world. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Solomon made a special study of people. From his study of people, he wrote many pieces of advice. His advice speaks of principles that control human feelings and actions.

*Principles given by God: Solomon's*

<sup>3</sup>everlasting—lasting forever; without beginning or end.

<sup>4</sup>principles—basic rules.

<sup>5</sup>trade routes—the roads business men traveled with their products.

principles of emotions and relationships show the truth. Ellen White wrote: "The senses and the working of the human mind . . . were put under law."—Adapted from *The Ministry [Work] of Healing*, p. 415. Sin has damaged God's creation. But human behavior in relationships is still influenced by the laws He put within humans. To discover and use the wisdom gained from these laws is to have what we need for better families.

**How do you think these principles for relationships have been spoiled by sin? What difference does the gospel make? How do Matthew 12:34, 35 and Philippians 2:2-11 help you with your answer?**

Sin attacks humans like a computer virus. Sin makes us self-centered and spoils us physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. The gospel puts us right with God and with each other through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19).

### **WEDNESDAY—JANUARY 11**

**THE KING'S LOVE POEM (Song of Solomon 1:9, 14, 16).**

The Song of Solomon holds many

gems (jewels) of wisdom about the principles of relationships, especially the marriage relationship.

The Song of Solomon shows the love between Solomon and a woman called "Shulamite" or "Shulamith." She clearly was his first true love and leading queen (Song of Solomon 6:9, 13). The song focuses on characteristics of their love rather than the history of their relationship.

God draws back the curtain on the closeness of marriage. Through the experiences of this couple, the Bible shows the relationship principles of forming close friendships and of being faithful in marriage. God Himself has chosen marriage as a symbol of His relationship with His people. The discoveries of love in the song help people better understand the greatest love relationship between Christ and the human soul.

**Why is it important to focus on the heart and the head in understanding relationships? Describe one new lesson you learned from the Song of Solomon that you can use in your marriage or in a close relationship with someone in your family.**

Match the verses in Column A with the characteristics<sup>6</sup> of the marriage relationship found in Column B.

Column A	Column B
A. Song of Solomon 1:9, 14, 16; Song of Solomon 2:3; Song of Solomon 4:1, 3, 7; Song of Solomon 5:10-16; Song of Solomon 6:1; Song of Solomon 7:1.	_____ Deciding to be faithful to one another.
B. Song of Solomon 1:15; Song of Solomon 2:14; Song of Solomon 4:9; Song of Solomon 5:12.	_____ Being totally honest and open with each other.
C. Song of Solomon 1:2; Song of Solomon 2:6; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 8:3.	_____ Using words of love, showing appreciation; giving positive and honest praise.
D. Song of Solomon 1:6; Song of Solomon 2:2; Song of Solomon 6:5; Song of Solomon 8:10.	_____ Looking at your spouse <sup>7</sup> when you talk to him or her.
E. Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 17; Song of Solomon 7:11, 12.	_____ Treating each other as friends.
F. Song of Solomon 5:16.	_____ Spending time together; playing together.
G. Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 6:3; Song of Solomon 8:6, 7.	_____ Showing feelings through touch.

### THURSDAY—JANUARY 12

#### GOD THE PARENT AND MARRIAGE PARTNER

What family words and symbols

are used to explain God in the following sets of verses?

Isaiah 54:5; Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 31:32

<sup>6</sup>characteristics—what the character is made of, such as patience or laziness.

<sup>7</sup>spouse—a husband or a wife.

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Isaiah 66:12, 13; Jeremiah 31:9;  
Hosea 11:1

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God speaks of Himself as the Husband of Israel. The New Testament also uses this symbol (Revelation 19:7). The Bible also shows God as a mother and a father. Read Isaiah 42:14 and Matthew 23:37.



**The Bible shows God as a mother hen who protects her children.**

*Looking at the perfect marriage partner and parent:* Watching others is one of the main ways we learn. In the Bible, God permits us to watch

Him as the perfect example of love in marriage and parenting. The family symbols for God show us what our families can be. These symbols also lead us closer to God as we come to know Him as the perfect marriage Partner and Parent.

*Principles for study:* Thinking of God as a husband or parent gives us valuable principles to study. These principles are not meant to be real blueprints for the responsibilities of married partners or parents. The symbol of God as a husband or parent in the Bible is often tied to local customs. In Ezekiel 16:6-14, God's work with Israel is compared<sup>8</sup> to the customs of engagement and marriage at that time. For example, a groom spread his robe over the bride. Then she was washed, anointed, and dressed in a beautiful gown. More important, the comparisons<sup>9</sup> are limited because humans are not God. All human efforts become nothing if compared to the faithfulness and closeness of God's love toward humans. But we are hopeful, because Jesus reflects God. God encourages us to love as Jesus loves us. God wants to help us love as Jesus loves through the gift of the Spirit.

**What other Bible symbols of God might be helpful to those who have had painful experiences in marriage or family living? See for instance, Psalm 18:2; John 10:11; and John 15:5.**

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<sup>8</sup>compared—to have shown how things are the same.

<sup>9</sup>comparisons—ways in which things are the same.



God is the same as a loving shepherd.

### FRIDAY—JANUARY 13

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Read Ellen G. White, "Bible Biographies," *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 9–15; *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 19–22.

*Reading well-chosen verses:* The Bible is the basis for understanding God's plan for family living. But not every verse is used for all people in all history, such as the punishment of death for a rebellious son or for a wife who had been sexually unfaithful before marriage (Deuteronomy 21: 18-21; Deuteronomy 22:20, 21).

**Knowing God's will for families as shown in the Bible today involves:**

- studying the religious and historical background of the verses;
- deciding the original meanings of the verses;
- comparing<sup>10</sup> verses on a topic with

<sup>10</sup>comparing—showing how things are the same.

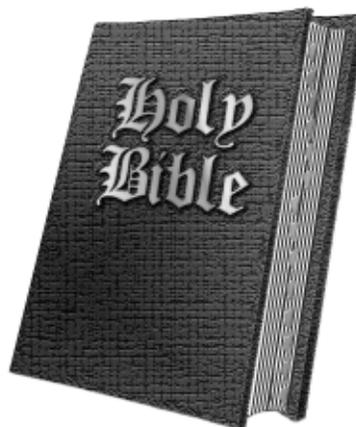
other verses and understanding how New Testament writers make use of Old Testament verses;

- discovering principles and details we can use in today's families.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As a class, discuss if there is any one thing that is the most important to a healthy family.
2. As a class, list the symbols used to describe how God relates to us. Who in the class likes certain symbols over others? Why? What should these different choices tell us about how God relates to different people?

**SUMMARY:** The Bible uses different ways of giving instruction for family living. These ways include God's direct commands, different marriage and family examples, proverbs describing relationship principles, and God's own example as a Husband and Parent. Guided by such advice from the Bible, family members can grow closer to God and to each other.



The guidebook for family relationships.