

Contents

1	A Family of Families—December 31–January 6	6
2	God’s Word on Family Living—January 7-13	14
3	Restoration—January 14-20	22
4	Living With Lambs—January 21-27	30
5	Disciples Making Disciples—January 28–February 3	38
6	Wise Words for Families—February 4-10	46
7	The Royal Love Song—February 11-17	56
8	Keys to Family Unity—February 18-24	64
9	Homes of Peace and Healing—February 25–March 3	72
10	Families of Faith—March 4-10	80
11	What Have They Seen in Your House?—March 11-17	88
12	Turning Hearts in the End Time—March 18-24	96

Editorial Office 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Principal Contributor

Ronald M. Flowers

Editor

Clifford R. Goldstein

Associate Editor

Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti

Publication Manager

Soraya Homayouni Parish

Editorial Assistant

Larie S. Gray

Pacific Press® Coordinator

Paul A. Hey

Art Director and Illustrator

Lars Justinen

Concept Design

Dever Design

The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is prepared by the Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the guides is under the general direction of the Sabbath School Publications Board, a subcommittee of the General Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM), publisher of the Bible study guides. The published guide reflects the input of worldwide evaluation committees and the approval of the Sabbath School Publications Board and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the author(s).

FAMILIES *in the*

***Love for God
cannot be
manifested
in any other
way than love
for others.***

In response to the lawyer's question about which was the greatest commandment, Jesus said: " ' "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself" ' ' " (Matt. 22:37-39, NIV).

Obviously, God cares about our relationships; otherwise, He would not have named loving others as the most important command besides loving Him. It's no coincidence Jesus linked these two commands: Love for God cannot be manifested in any way other than love for others.

God created people as individuals with unique character traits that make them who they are. Yet, He created them also as social beings who enter into relationships with others. And nowhere is our relationship with others more important, more fraught with both temporal and eternal consequences, than in the family. Here so much of who we are, either for good or for ill, is determined.

Though living as a Christian at home is crucial, it can be challenging, even harder than in public, where it is easier to put on façades. At home, generally, the masks come off. It is a lot easier to fool others than to fool those with whom you share the same table, the same rooms, the same bed day after day, year after year. If you can be a Christian at home, you can be one anywhere.

Families fit into God's design as centers in which individuals experience intimate association with others and are prepared for the greatest intimacy of all—a relationship with God. In the family both children and adults may have a warm experience that reflects the Creator and that encourages them in loving discipleship. On the other hand, because of pseudolove or indifference, people may leave their home with emotional and spiritual problems that are often difficult to erase.

Just as our homes have the greatest potential to do the most good, they also can do the most harm. No wonder that the Bible says so much about family life. So much depends upon it.

FAMILY *of* GOD

Christian families face the challenge of seeking to live according to God's will for life and for relationships, even as each individual member finds himself or herself falling short of that will (*Rom. 3:23*). That's why, first and foremost, true Christians grasp by faith the sinless life of Christ and claim that life as their own, the foundation upon which they can build a relationship with God that will enhance their relationships with their own family (*Eph. 5:2*).

The wonder of our faith is the good news that God knows all about us. He sympathizes with our weaknesses and is full of compassion and longsuffering. Knowing this about Him, even experiencing for ourselves His love for us despite our faults, we do the same to others, especially those in our own family. Through family relationships God wants to show His love to the world. As families learn to live together according to the Word of God, His grace is diffused to all whose lives they touch, winsomely drawing others to Jesus.

Marriage and family, along with the Sabbath, are two institutions passed to humankind from Eden. Equally the work of the Creator's hand, they are indissolubly linked and meant to bring glory to God and blessings to humanity. As creationists raised up to give voice to Revelation's call to worship the One who made all things (*see Rev. 14:7*), Seventh-day Adventists have lifted up the Sabbath, reminding the world of the Creator's rest. Marriage and family, in their own way, also recall Creation, when a merciful Maker prepared a place for humanity to rest, a haven where the power of His love draws diversity into oneness, where a promise is a promise and commitment means commitment. This place of rest, this haven, is the home.

However, this quarter's study has been written in the sad recognition that for many, this haven doesn't exist as it should. Our goal, if nothing else, is through study of the Word to help homes and families be what God would have them to be: more loving, more secure in Christ.

Ron Flowers, author of this quarter's study guide, has worked in the department of Family Ministries at the General Conference since 1980. He has been teaching and writing on family issues for many years. He and his wife, Karen, have two adult children.

Got Questions

Sabbath School
University *has answers!*

Sabbath School University is a 28-minute discussion of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. SSU discusses the content and strategies to enrich your Sabbath School with fellowship, outreach, Bible study, and missions. Sabbath School leaders, don't miss this weekly broadcast on Hope Channel.



www.hopetv.org

things can get crowded

Malawi Adventist College is growing, expanding to offer degrees in business, English, and education. The college needs more classrooms, more dormitories to serve the growing number of students. Currently nine students crowd into what should be a small married-student apartment.

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help ease the growing pains at Malawi Adventist College and will make life-changing differences for these students today and for the church in Malawi in the years to come.

MISSION 

Your weekly Mission Offering supports life-changing projects around the world. For more information and to give your Mission Offering online, visit

www.adventistmission.org