

FAITH, FINANCES, FUN, FITNESS
AND THE FUTURE OF THE FAMILY



IT TAKES A FAMILY

ADRIAN ROGERS



Pastor, teacher, and author **Adrian Rogers** has introduced people all over the world to the love of Jesus Christ, and has impacted untold numbers of lives by presenting profound biblical truth with such simplicity that a 5-year-old can understand it, yet it still speaks to the heart of the 50-year-old.

Love Worth Finding was started in 1987 as the broadcast ministry of Adrian Rogers and remains the exclusive provider of his comprehensive teachings today. By connecting others with his plainspoken and timeless biblical wisdom through resources like books, video and audio recordings, digital content, and other media, we seek to not only reach non-Christians with the hope of Jesus, but strengthen and encourage everyday Christians in their faith as well.



TRUTH WORTH SHARING ■ HOPE COLLECTION

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TRUTH WORTH SHARING

Following Jesus' last words of earthly instruction to us in Matthew 28:19, Love Worth Finding's *Truth Worth Sharing* collections are designed to be used both in your own personal growth and, more importantly, in your assignment to "Go therefore and make disciples..."

“God can use you, with what you have, where you are. And He will supply your every need.”

ADRIAN ROGERS

This booklet is taken from Adrian Rogers' message series *It Takes a Family*, available online at the link below.

lwf.org/products/cda159



It Takes a Family

Raising a child is a precious responsibility. If you're a parent, you know that better than anybody else. The home is the place where children get their self-concept. It is where a child learns who he is, what he can do, and what is expected of him.

The home is also the place where a child develops a sense of security and self-confidence. As love and value are liberally communicated, a child learns to feel that he is worth something to his family, thus he will sense worth in himself. Most importantly, he will feel that he is worth much to God and others.

Another reason the family is important is that a child gets a snapshot of life from his home. For instance, if there are limitations, disciplines, and rules in the home, then a child learns that he is not a law unto himself. If there is no respect for authority inside the home, he will grow up with no respect for authority outside the home.

Lastly, the family is vitally important to a child because this is where he will receive his first concept of God. If the home does not shower love, mercy, grace, and concern on that child; then his concept of God may be warped.

Though I've built quite a convincing argument for the importance of the family upon the raising of a child, I'm afraid that many of us have allowed outsiders to influence our children. We're taking

them to classes at the community center, after-school sporting practices, weekend excursions with friends, social club meetings, art and music lessons. We've allowed our children's minds to be shaped by all kinds of messages at the movie theater and library, on the television and billboards, and in the magazines.

Now, let me quickly add that I am not opposed to children becoming involved in activities or having a parent-approved exposure to the media, but we must rightfully recognize the role of the family versus the role of the community—and even the world—in the raising of our children.

**We must take our families
back. Otherwise the world will
become our children's parent.**

In attempting to explain the importance of parental and societal influence in the life of a child, Hillary Clinton wrote a book entitled, *It Takes A Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us*. With all due respect, I must disagree. It takes families to make a village. And it takes a family to raise a child.

We must take our families back. Otherwise the world will become our children's parent. You can begin today with this guidebook of biblical insights and practical advice for your family.

First, I've written some biblical advice on important topics such as faith, fitness, and finances to enhance your commitment to build a strong, Christ-centered family—one which lovingly

nurtures each other, honors God, and serves the body of Christ.

Second, I've provided practical suggestions to help your family reach this commitment. At the end of each section in this guidebook, I've offered some suggestions on what to cover in a family meeting. These meetings will give your family an opportunity to brainstorm about its future and help you assess the effectiveness of your goals. Each meeting will begin with a verse from God's Word that focuses on the theme of the meeting.

I have also provided some suggested objectives and corresponding goals you can set together as a family. Under each goal, you can create strategies to see that this particular goal is accomplished. Again, these are merely suggestions to help build spiritual maturity into your family. I pray that this will bring revival and renewed commitment to you and yours.



Family Faith

...according to your faith be it unto you.
(Matthew 9:29)

The first step in taking back our families from society and building strong families for our Lord is to have faith. The most powerful and influential people on the earth are mothers and fathers of faith. It is up to us, as parents, to nurture our children with the truth and love of the Savior. One way we can do this is to communicate values about our Christian faith.

As parents, we must believe God for our children. In Mark 9 we read the account of the man who brought his demon-possessed son to Jesus for deliverance. Mark 9:23-24 says:

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

God did not put the burden upon the child to believe, God put the burden upon the parent to believe. That boy needed somebody to have faith for him. He was powerless. I have decided to have faith for my children, will you?

It is our divine job given by God to train a child to follow the course of life that will bring God glory. For instance, not only do we need to communicate our core beliefs about God, we also need to teach practical applications from God's Word about the choices they need to make regarding temptation. Proverbs 22:6 says, "**Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**" Are you training your children? Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- *Do I take them to a Bible-believing church?*
- *Have I enrolled them in a Sunday school class?*
- *Have I met their friends and know how they spend their time?*
- *Do I know where they go when they leave our house?*
- *Am I living—by precept and example—a life of holiness?*

**The most powerful and
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Training is more than teaching. Take some time each week to not only talk to your children about how to overcome the temptations of this world, but also train them to be overcomers. If you don't do it, someone—or something—else will.

Do you know what has become one of the most popular educators of our children? Television. It

has become the babysitter of convenience for our children. Suppose next door to you there was a man and a woman who were living together and practicing immoral sex. Would you say to your child, "Mommy and Daddy are busy doing chores and running errands. Here's your stool. Now, get up there and look out the window and watch all of that." The only difference is that television has brought into your living room a veritable grocery list of what the Bible commands us to avoid in Colossians 3:5-7, 1 Peter 4:3, and 1 John 2:16.

How are you training your children to practice wisdom and discernment in the choices they make when you're not around? One day your children will get married and move from your home. What will they take with them? Will you have planted godly seeds of faith so they will make godly choices that bring glory to God?

When you train children in the important matters of faith, you teach, model, practice, and memorize the skill or lesson so that no matter how rebellious they may want to be, they have the skill, the knowledge, and the character to restrain themselves. Most of all, when they are saved, they have the Holy Spirit to empower them against the temptations of Satan.

Will you believe God for your children? I invite you to come before God and commit your family to God. Bring to Him all the needs that your children have. Bring to Him the burdens you carry about your shortcomings as a parent. Confess your fears and failures. Rejoice in His power to forgive and make all things new. Ask Him to give you the kind of faith you're going to need to raise your children in the way that He would want. Now, believe that God is going to grant your request that you have asked in faith.

FAMILY MEETING: FAITH

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

■ OBJECTIVE

To be a family that understands God's Word and seeks to glorify God through prayer, evangelism, the study of God's Word, worship and fellowship with the body of Christ, and ministry with our gifts.

■ GOAL 1: LEARN BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Strategies:

- Take notes during the sermon and discuss as a family.
- Memorize one scripture verse a week as a family.
- Read a book by a Christian author on the basic principles of our faith, e.g., creation, salvation, Jesus' second coming.

■ GOAL 2: REACH THE LOST FOR JESUS CHRIST

Strategies:

- Pray for our neighborhood as a family.
- Learn how to present the Gospel to a nonbeliever.
- Invite an unsaved friend over to dinner and show the "Jesus" film.

GOAL 3: PRAY AND MINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Strategies:

- Contact a single parent in our church and volunteer to baby-sit.
- Contact a homeless shelter in our community and volunteer as a family once a month.
- Contact our church to get the name of an elderly person who needs assistance.

GOAL 4: WORSHIP THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Strategies:

- Attend Sunday worship.
- Get together to pray and sing in a family worship time.
- Get away for a family weekend and worship God amid His creation.

GOAL 5: PRAY AND MINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF OVERSEAS MISSIONARIES

Strategies:

- Put up a world map in our home and target areas to pray for each week.
- Get a list of missionaries from our church and mail care packages to a few.
- Get on email lists for overseas missionaries and send letters of encouragement.



Family Finances

But godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Timothy 6:6)

So many families I know are in financial bondage. Maybe your family is one. Would you like to take a test to find out whether or not you are in financial bondage? Read over the following statements and see how many are true in your home.

- *We charge daily expenditures because of a lack of funds.*
- *We put off paying bills until the next month.*
- *We borrow money to pay fixed expenses, such as taxes and insurance.*
- *Our annual debt retirement on long-term debts exceeds twenty percent of our annual income.*
- *We are unaware of exactly how much we owe.*
- *Creditors are calling or writing about our past due bills.*
- *We take out new loans to pay off old ones.*
- *Sometimes we think about being dishonest with our money.*
- *Returning a tithe of our income to God is becoming difficult.*
- *My spouse and I argue over finances.*

If you responded “yes” more often than “no,” maybe this is a good time to look at your finances and discover what God has to say.

What are you teaching your children about *credit*? There’s a false god in the land today, and it is the god of credit. Let me give you a little advice: pay off your credit cards. For many families, the interest can be as much as an additional 20% of their credit card balance every year. That money could be turned into seed money in a savings account. Many families need to get those cards out and have a little plastic surgery.

What are you teaching your children about net worth? Do you think that God measures how good you are by how much money you make?

What are you teaching your children about *net worth*? Do you think that God measures how good you are by how much money you make? Absolutely not. Your virtue is not measured by your money, but instead by Who died for you and lives in you. There’s nothing virtuous about us apart from Jesus. Our worth is measured at the width and height of the cross.

What are you teaching your children about *eternal wealth*? Mark 8:36 says: “**For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?**” We are born with nothing and we’ll take nothing with us. Job 1:21 says, “**...naked**

came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

What are you teaching your children about *stewardship*? We are stewards of what God has given us, not owners (read 1 Timothy 6:17 and Psalm 24:1). Owners have rights, but stewards have responsibilities. God says, "**...what hast thou that thou didst not receive?...**"(1 Corinthians 4:7). All that we own is on loan from God. We are merely the stewards.

Here are some additional things to teach your children about finances:

- *Seek God first.* (Matthew 6:33)
- *Trust God to provide.* (Matthew 6:8, 1 Timothy 6:17, Proverbs 11:28)
- *Be productive.* (Proverbs 24:29-34)
- *Be forthright and diligent in our work.* (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 and 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)
- *Invest wisely and provide for the future of our family.* (Proverbs 13:22)
- *Do not become victims of "get rich" schemes.* (Proverbs 28:20)
- *Be joyful for God's provision.* (Psalm 35:27; 84:11-12)
- *Be generous.* (1 Timothy 6:18 and Acts 4:32-37)

Do you want to get serious about your family finances? Then, I encourage you to ask God to show you where you need help. Maybe you need to confess the sin of discontent. Maybe you need to look at how much you're tithing. Maybe you need to think about your children's future. After you and your spouse have prayed, schedule a family meeting. Your first meeting should be a thanksgiving and praise service for all that God has

done for your family. At your next meeting, make an assessment of your family's financial situation.

FAMILY MEETING: FINANCES

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matthew 6:33)

■ **OBJECTIVE**

To be a faithful steward of the financial resources that God has provided our family.

■ **GOAL 1: LEARN BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES ABOUT FINANCES**

Strategies:

- Take a financial planning course at church.
- Read a book on finances and discuss it with our family.
- Attend a financial workshop sponsored by a Christian financial planner.

■ **GOAL 2: REDUCE DEBT**

Strategies:

- Ask God to show us how to reduce our debt.
- Total up all credit card invoices, mortgage notes, and other articles of debt. Write down a plan of action to reduce our debt.
- Eliminate spending on selected or all credit cards.

■ **GOAL 3: LIVE ON A FAMILY BUDGET**

Strategies:

- Develop and write down a family budget in which there is a commitment from each member to live within the income earned.

- Meet once a month with the family to discuss how each member is doing according to the plan and where improvements can be made.
- Make an envelope for each child's weekly allowance to limit their spending to only what is in that envelope.

GOAL 4: GLORIFY THE LORD WITH OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Strategies:

- Seek the Lord in prayer.
- Study His Word to learn about tithing and offerings.
- Begin to tithe in accordance with what God has said.

GOAL 5: SECURE A SOUND FINANCIAL FUTURE FOR OUR FAMILY

Strategies:

- Open and build a savings account for emergency expenditures.
- Invest a portion of the family income in a fund for future needs.
- Talk with a financial planner about alternative methods of saving and investing.



Family Fun

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. (Psalm 126:2-3)

Your home should not only be a place where you are free to believe, but it should be a place where you are free to laugh. I want your home to be such a happy place that your neighbors who don't know the Lord will see the laughter and joy that is in your home and say, "The Lord is doing great things for them."

Let me tell you something about Jesus. When He walked upon this earth, little children loved Him! They wanted to come and sit in His lap. Do you know any children who want to spend time with a person who is a pale, sanctimonious, religious recluse? No. Children want to be around happy people who have deep pockets of joy to pass around. Children were attracted to this Man of great gladness (read Matthew 19:14 and Hebrews 1:9b).

We must take the time to laugh with our children. Don't let Satan deceive you into thinking that you can't be a happy Christian. God is not some sort of cosmic killjoy Who sees people having

a good time and swoops down to break up the party. That is not the God of the Bible, and that is not the God of a happy home. If you don't learn to add a little laughter to your home, it's going to be a long, hard ride through Ulcer Gulch!

One other word about Satan's deceptions: don't let him deceive you into thinking that you have to have alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to have fun. When was the last time you saw a billboard from a major liquor company that depicted a drunk in the gutter? Or a print advertisement from a cigarette manufacturer that showed a grieving family by the bed of person dying from emphysema? That's not fun. And if it's not selling "fun," no one is going to buy it! So, what do they do instead? They build an association of deception between having fun and smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol.

Let me encourage you to take the initiative and communicate what the Bible says about the tempting vices of this world, including drinking (see Proverbs 20:1, 23:21, 31:4-5; Isaiah 5:11; Luke 21:34; Romans 14:21; 1 Corinthians 5:11; Ephesians 5:18). Next, make some practical applications, such as:

- Pray for and with your child that God will make him strong against the temptations he faces to drink.
- Do not have alcoholic beverages in your home.
- Expose your child to the real effects of alcohol—not the glittery promises advertised by the liquor industry. Maybe you can take him to a hospital emergency room on a weekend night and let him see the people who are victims of drunk driving accidents. Or take him to the places where the "down and out" gather and let him see the drunks in the gutter covered in their own filth.

Hold your child accountable by talking with him regularly about his attitudes and practices regarding drinking, smoking cigarettes, and using drugs.

Your home needs to be brimming over with homemade happiness and fun. You need to be playing games, drawing pictures, building woodworking projects, filling photo albums, and creating scrapbooks. When you begin to fill your home with laughter, your spirits will be refreshed. Nothing can breathe life back into your family better than the joy of the Lord.

**We must take the time to
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be a happy Christian.**

Laughter has a way of releasing tension in a broken spirit, broken body, or broken home. If someone starts to smile when things are tense; the tension is broken, communication is started, and things begin to improve. Try it the next time the barometer of tension begins to rise in your home.

Family fun will also build memories that will last a lifetime. Memories are landmarks—they keep us from getting lost. Memories also bring a sense of security and belonging to a child's life. They anchor deep in the soul and can be recalled when we need them.

What do you remember about your childhood? What kind of car your daddy drove? What kind of a

house you lived in? The color of your first bike? The first tooth you lost? The late night talks with your mom? You may remember many things, but I'll tell you what you enjoy remembering—the fun times in your home. I want your children's memories to be that of a happy home that rings with laughter.

Let me tell you something about raising children. Be firm, be fair, and be fun! You can just about put all of child-rearing in that one sentence.

- *Be firm.* Have some rules.
- *Be fair.* Make sure each child is treated honestly and with respect.
- *Be fun.* Don't be an ogre! **“Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing”** (Psalm 126:2a).

FAMILY MEETING: FUN

For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. (Psalm 128:2-4)

■ OBJECTIVE

To nurture a family atmosphere in which every family member enjoys spending time together that is fun, relaxing, and refreshing.

■ GOAL 1: COMMIT TO A FAMILY FUN NIGHT ON A WEEKLY BASIS

Strategies:

- Play board games.

- Compete in a game of family basketball.
- Build a large crossword puzzle.

GOAL 2: ENJOY SPECIAL OUTINGS ON A QUARTERLY BASIS

Strategies:

- Take a trip to the zoo.
- Go on a camping trip.
- Attend an art gallery opening.

GOAL 3: TURN FAMILY TASKS INTO FAMILY FUN

Strategies:

- Turn cleaning up the garage into a scavenger hunt.
- Turn yard work into a science project.
- Turn a trip to the attic into a trip down memory lane.

GOAL 4: ENSURE FAMILY OUTINGS BECOME MEMORIES

Strategies:

- Start a family journal.
- Create a family scrapbook of outings.
- Always keep film and batteries in the camera.

GOAL 5: HELP EACH FAMILY MEMBER FEEL SPECIAL

Strategies:

- Allow each family member to choose what is on the dinner menu one night a week.
- At the end of each day, recognize each family member for something that they have done that honored the Lord.
- Create a special frame with our child's name and put it on the refrigerator with his or her latest work of art or photo.



Family Fitness

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

God wants us to glorify Him in our bodies—not just in our spirits. How is your family doing in the area of temple maintenance? Romans 12:1-2 says:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Christians are called disciples, yet so many of us lead undisciplined lives. Friend, we cannot call ourselves disciples unless we lead disciplined lives. And that applies not just to the spiritual aspects of our lives, but we need to also be disciplined in matters of diet, exercise, and rest. First Corinthians

10:31 says, “**Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God**” (italics mine).

My wife has written a book entitled, *The Bible’s Seven Secrets To Healthy Eating*. In it, she writes extensively about the good foods that God gave His children in the good land. Some of these healthy foods include whole grains, herbs, fish, fowl, fruits, and vegetables. God also gave clear directives as to *how* we are to eat to maintain a healthy lifestyle. I encourage you to get a book such as this for your family.

**Friend, we cannot call
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We need to also get our kids and ourselves out there and get some exercise! Take a bike ride together. Go on a hike, play a game of kick ball—anything to get your family up and moving! Exercise is great for building up these temples of the Holy Spirit; it is also great for relieving the stresses these bodies of ours accumulate throughout the day.

Friend, the statistics on the state of family fitness are alarming. According to hospital statistics, more than a third of adults are overweight in the United States. Other studies show that one in five children between the ages of 6 and 17 are overweight or obese.

The last thing I want you to consider is how your family rests each week. Perhaps you need to take a close look at how you spend the Sabbath—our

weekly day of rest. You know, rest is equally as important as eating well and exercising regularly. We must do all three to keep our bodies fit for the work of the Lord.

I encourage you to have a family meeting and ask some hard questions: “What are we eating? How are we spending our free time? Are we going to continue to live this way or are we going to make a decision as a family so that we might be a testimony to our neighbors and those around us?” Your family ought to stand out in matters of faith, in matters of fun, in matters of finance, and in matters of fitness. It’s your choice.

FAMILY MEETING: FITNESS

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)

■ **OBJECTIVE**

To nurture a family atmosphere in which every family member enjoys spending time together that is fun, relaxing, and refreshing.

■ **GOAL 1: COMMIT TO A HEALTHY, BALANCED, NUTRITIONAL DIET**

Strategies:

- Enroll in a cooking class for better nutrition.
- Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the kitchen counter to take the place of junk food.
- Take inventory of the food pantry and begin substituting more healthy alternatives for things
- such as refined white sugar and sugar cereals.
- Begin using a cookbook that has healthy recipes.

- Work all four food groups into our family's daily diet.

GOAL 2: COMMIT TO A REGULAR EXERCISE REGIMEN

Strategies:

- Develop a fitness plan for each family member.
- Put up an exercise chart on the kitchen door to track our exercise schedule.
- Begin playing tennis as a family sport.
- Join the local community center to encourage our children in group sports, swimming, weight lifting, etc.
- Reward ourselves based on the goals we've set for becoming fit.

GOAL 3: BE A GODLY INFLUENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY, WITH OUR FAMILY, AND OUR NEIGHBORS

Strategies:

- Plan a block party and make sure all our recipes are in line with our fitness plan.
- Prepare at least one low-fat meal one night a week (work into more as the weeks progress).
- Engage a co-worker, friend, or classmate in a fitness activity at least once a week.
- Get involved in a community softball, soccer, or tennis league.
- Enter a nutritious recipe in our local fair that we've created as a nutritious alternative to a standard entry such as a pie or cake.



Family Future

O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me [God], and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! (Deuteronomy 5:29)

Do you want to know if your family has a future? The answer lies in the keeping of the Ten Commandments. I have sometimes referred to God's commandments as "a perfect ten for homes that win." I felt so strongly about the importance of the Ten Commandments in the family that I have written a book entitled *Ten Secrets for a Successful Family*.

These commandments from God are ironclad and rock-ribbed, but they are not cold, rigid restrictions. Properly understood, they can be the liberating laws of life. Indeed, these commands are the tracks upon which your family is to run.

There is no greater weapon in your arsenal to fight the attacks of Satan against your home than the truth of God. It is a fixed standard of right and wrong that can break Satan's strongholds and bring hope to your family. Truth stands whether we believe it or not. Today, you cannot guide or discipline your children by simply saying, "Because I said so." Today's generation is wiser. We need to say, "Here's what the Word of God says..."

**There is no greater weapon
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The following Scripture contains perhaps the most important passage in all of Deuteronomy, if not the entire Bible, to Orthodox Jews. They repeat this passage—the Great Shema—at least twice a day. It is foundational to the future of our Christian families as well.

Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them

diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. (Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

God's plan is that faith be passed on from parent to child. Our children are to see our faith in God in all that we do and all that we say. Children can spot a phony a mile away. They can tell when you are trying to force-feed them something that you're not feeding yourself. Our children need to see that we have a heartfelt, passionate, and sincere love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you want a future for your family? Your children need to see that you are going to love God through the hard times and the lean times. When the rubber meets the road, and you feel your strength is spent; your children need to see you turn to Jesus and rely on His power to witness through you of His grace, patience, compassion, wisdom, and love.

Your children need to know God is in control. If they don't sense that you are in control and establishing guidelines for them to follow, they are going to grow up with a sense of insecurity. They will bounce around until someone outside your family forces them to have a boundary.

Is there a future for the family? There is, as you put all your hope in the Lord, lean upon His strength, depend upon His Word, and pass this faith on to your children.

FAMILY MEETING: FUTURE

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.
(Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

■ **OBJECTIVE**

To enhance our family faith through a greater understanding and application of biblical principles.

■ **GOAL 1: DEVELOP FAMILY TIMES OF WORSHIP, STUDY, AND DEVOTION**

Strategies:

- Once a month, have a time of Bible study, prayer, and worship.
- Pray together at least three times each week.
- Find a devotional guide that is family-oriented and meets the needs of our family.
- Utilize Bible games to make learning fun and creative.

■ **GOAL 2: TRAIN OUR FAMILY IN THE WAYS OF THE LORD**

Strategies:

- Hang a copy of the Ten Commandments in our home.
- Act out a drama focused on a concern that will probably arise in the life of our child, so that she will be prepared to do what God wants her to do.
- Actively seek out teaching opportunities in everyday things such as housecleaning, grocery shopping, etc.

- Hold our children accountable for lessons that they have learned and can apply each week.

GOAL 3: GET INVOLVED IN PROMOTING THE FAMILY IN OUR COMMUNITY, NEIGHBORHOOD, NATION, AND WORLD

Strategies:

- Become a member of a Christian organization and get materials on how to be more involved in creating a positive future for our family.
- Assign a project to our family to research a topic in the news that affects the family.
- Write our local, state, and federal representatives in support of pro-family measures being debated.
- Join a parent-teacher group to make sure the voice of the Christian family is being heard in our children's school.



Family Faithfulness

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
(Matthew 19:5-6)

You can hire the best carpenter in the world and give him the assignment to build a house; but if that carpenter doesn't know what a house is, there's no way he can build it. In the same way, you can take the best people in the world and tell them to build a home; but if they don't know what a home is according to the Word of God, there's no way they can build it. They must have a guide. And that guide is built around three words in the above passage—"leave," "cleave," and "one."

First, you are to leave. Your task as a parent is to get your children ready to leave the nest. You're also going to have to work yourself out of a job—not out of a relationship, but out of a responsibility. You are successful as a mother and as a father when your children no longer need you. Sounds funny, doesn't it? But it's true.

There comes a time when children reach a certain age, they no longer need Mom and Dad to make every decision, to fuss over them, to care

for them, and to guide them. At this point, some parents will think their child is rebellious, but this is not necessarily the case. The child may be just testing his wings. If misunderstood, these initial tests of independence can turn into rebellion.

It is at this point that parents need to see that there is a legitimate “need to be needed” time followed by a “need to be free” time. I’ve thought of this time like a bar of soap. If you squeeze your children too hard during this time, they’ll pop right out of your hand. But if you hold them gently and understand you’re working yourself out of a job, you’ll clean up! They will come back as the best friends you have ever had!

God’s arithmetic is one plus one equals one. I like to think of marriage as a romance in which both the hero and the heroine die in the first chapter.

The next step is to cleave. When a couple makes a holy commitment before God to remain faithful, there are no problems too big to solve, just people too small to solve them. Unfortunately, it’s getting easier in our laws today to leave and cleave—then leave and cleave with someone else! I tell young couples that they must first leave the nest before they can cleave to another person. And I charge them that if they have left and cleft, there is no turning back again. There are no loopholes in a holy vow.

The last step is to become one. The husband and wife are to become one flesh. When you get married, you marry a whole person—body, soul, and spirit. God’s arithmetic is one plus one equals one. I like to think of marriage as a romance in which both the hero and the heroine die in the first chapter.

Husbands and wives are to be one flesh physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Not only should we be sweethearts, we ought to be friends. Our spouse is to be our completer, not our competitor. Like a bow and a violin, each is inadequate alone; but when brought together, they make beautiful music.

But, what if you’ve failed? What if you’ve experienced a broken home? You cannot unscramble eggs. What’s done is done. But, let me assure you, divorce is not the unpardonable sin. It is not a dead-end street. If you are divorced, you are not a second-class citizen. There’s something called the grace of God. If you’re in Christ Jesus, you’re a new creature. Many, many godly people have come out of broken homes filled with heartaches and tears and gone on to enjoy lives full of hope and healing.

God-like love is a commitment to remain faithful until the Lord calls one of you home. There is a commitment to loving that is different than just “being in love.” I pray that you will know and practice that kind of commitment with your spouse. Love is an action, “being in love” is a feeling.

I pray that your marriage is running on the engine of God’s love. Make certain that Christ is the head of your home. If your marriage is not a Christian marriage, give your hearts to Jesus Christ because the devil is working against you. If you’re married and both of you have made Jesus your Lord, continue to feed your love day by day

and don't take it for granted. Your godly home can perhaps be the greatest testimony that you'll have in this world.

If you're divorced, ask God for forgiveness if it was your fault. If you were divorced because of someone else's wrongdoing, forgive that person in your heart and don't let bitterness carry you away. If you're unmarried, I implore you not to be unequally yoked but to marry another believer and build a Christian home.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, **“And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”** A marriage with Christ as the center cannot be easily broken. Stand faithful to His call of a holy union in your marriage. I want your home to be the sweetest place on earth, the nearest place to heaven. The family is the only part of the Garden of Eden that we have left. God bless you as you endeavor to raise your family for the glory of our Lord.

FAMILY MEETING: FAITHFULNESS

...choose you this day whom ye shall serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

■ OBJECTIVE

To encourage our family to serve the Lord faithfully in obedience to His commands.

■ GOAL 1: BUILD OUR MARRIAGE UPON GOD'S PRINCIPLES

Strategies:

- Enroll in a marriage-building seminar at our church.
- Commit to pray with my spouse on a daily basis.

- Read a book together on marriage and meet once a week to discuss it.

GOAL 2: BUILD OUR CHILDREN UP IN THEIR FAITH

Strategies:

- Study the Scriptures with our children on a weekly basis.
- Pray with our children on a daily basis.
- Check out some Christian history books from the church library for our children to read over the summer.

GOAL 3: ENCOURAGE FAMILY FAITHFULNESS AT OUR LOCAL CHURCH

Strategies:

- Attend weekly church worship services.
- Enroll in a weekly Sunday school class at church.
- Have a different family member place the tithing envelope in the offering plate each week.

GOAL 4: SERVE THE LORD AS A FAMILY IN MINISTRY

Strategies:

- Serve food at a soup kitchen once a month.
- Adopt an elderly person in a nursing home near our house and begin to do things for this person as a family each week.
- Volunteer to take care of a person's yard who is unable to do this due to illness, disability, or finances.



A Closing Plea

My friend, have you given your life to the Lord? Do you have the assurance that if you were to die right now, you would go straight to heaven? If not, please let me tell you how you can be saved, on the authority of the Word of God.

■ ADMIT YOUR SIN

First, you must understand and admit that you are a sinner. The Bible says, “**There is none righteous, no, not one**” (Romans 3:10). “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**” (Romans 3:23). Sin is an offense against God that carries a serious penalty. “**For the wages of sin is death** [eternal separation from the love and mercy of God] **but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**” (Romans 6:23).

■ ABANDON YOUR EFFORTS

Second, you must abandon any efforts to save yourself. If we could save ourselves, Jesus’ death would have been unnecessary! Even “getting religion” cannot get you to heaven. The Bible says it is “**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His [God’s] mercy He saved us**” (Titus 3:5). Salvation is by God’s grace, “**...not of works, lest any man should boast**” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

■ ACKNOWLEDGE CHRIST'S PAYMENT

Third, you must believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for your sins. **“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”** (Romans 5:8). That means He died in your place. Your sin debt has been paid by the blood of Jesus Christ, which **“cleanseth us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7).

■ ACCEPT CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR

Fourth, you must put your faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone for your salvation. **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31). Salvation is God's gift to you! **“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 6:23). **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”** (Acts 4:12).

Pray this simple prayer from your heart:

Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I know that You love me and want to save me. I know I can't save myself. Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God, who died on the cross to pay for my sins. I believe God raised You from the dead. I now turn from my sin and, by faith, receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sins and save me, Lord Jesus. In Your name I pray, Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer today, please contact us and let us know. Then go find and join a Christ-honoring, Bible-believing church near you!

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“ Point people to
Scripture and then
get out of the way.”

ADRIAN ROGERS



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