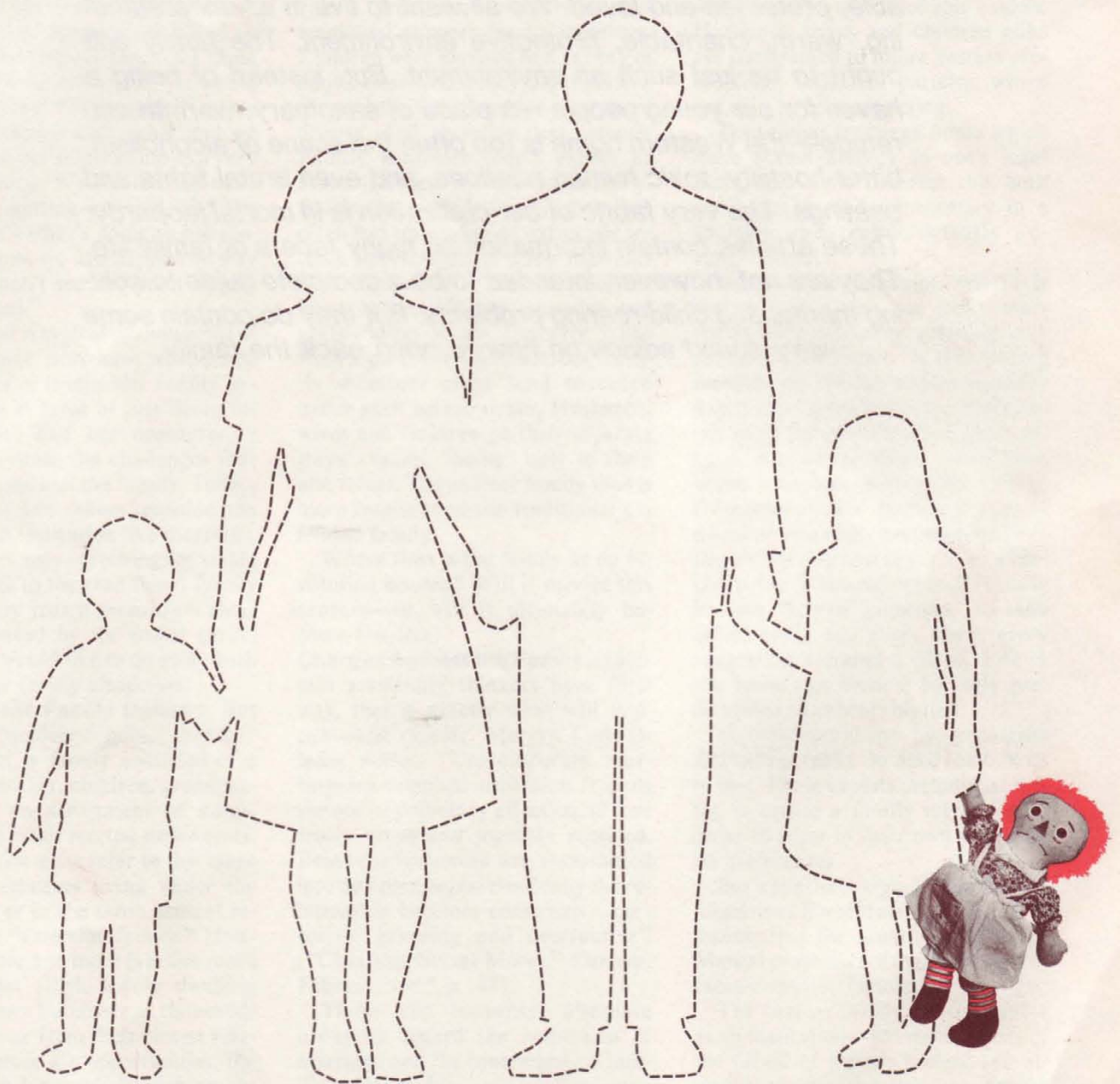


BRING BACK THE FAMILY



Every normal human being wants to be warm, well-fed, comfortable, protected and loved. We all want to live in an understanding, warm, charitable, protective environment. The family unit ought to be just such an environment. But, instead of being a haven for our young people—a place of sanctuary, warmth and refuge—the Western home is too often the scene of alcoholism, bitter hostility, toxic human relations, and even brutal fights and beatings. The very fabric of our civilization is in mortal jeopardy. These articles contain information on many facets of family life. They are not, however, intended to be a complete guide to solving marital and child-rearing problems. But they do contain some very sound advice on how to bring back the family.

THE NUCLEAR FAMILY— Will it survive the 20th century?

by Brian Knowles

“I THINK marriage is a sort of dead end,” a senior college coed stated. “I have seen so many couples who were very happy when they were just living together. Then they decided to get married, and after that things really got to be a drag. I don’t know why. . . . I think if Bill and I were married, we would take each other for granted. Now we really appreciate each other and we both regard our relationship as a very precious thing. We wouldn’t want to spoil it by getting married, and I’m afraid that’s what’s going to happen. So as long as we are happy the way we are, I don’t see any point to getting married.”

This coed is typical of thousands of young people who have abandoned the idea of a traditional family arrangement in favor of just living together. She and her counterparts clearly illustrate the challenges that face marriage and the family. Today, sociologists and others question the need for an institution like marriage, and are seriously searching for viable alternatives to the traditional family setup. Every year it seems new ideas are introduced by the *avant garde*, and many would like to do away with the nuclear family altogether.

The Nuclear Family Defined. But what is a “nuclear family,” anyway? In the past, a family consisted of a father, a mother, children, grandparents, and an assortment of aunts, uncles and other related dependents. Today, sociologists refer to this large group of relatives living under the same roof or in the same general region as an “extended family.” However, as more and more families move into smaller single-family dwelling units or move hundreds or thousands of miles away from their closest relatives to pursue job opportunities, the possibilities for living in such an extended-family situation narrow. Grandparents are sent to “retirement

homes” and singles find their own apartments. After this exodus, what remains is the basic “nuclear family”—husband, wife and children.

The extended family used to provide a great deal of stability and emotional support for its members. Children were exposed to a variety of adults after whom they could pattern themselves. Relationships were more diverse, and therefore less intense. Family members didn’t expect as much from each other emotionally. But in the nuclear family, members often feel trapped in an extremely intense situation where a few individuals are expected to provide all of the love, companionship, support and gratification which formerly came from a great variety of sources. Family members often tend to crack under such severe strain. Husbands, wives and children go their separate ways, coming “home” only to sleep and refuel. The nuclear family thus is more fragile than the traditional extended family.

Where then is the family as an institution headed? Will it survive this century—or will it ultimately become obsolete?

Charges Against the Family. If certain antifamily thinkers have their way, that is exactly what will happen—and rapidly. Mervyn Cadwalader writes: “Contemporary marriage is a wretched institution. It spells the end of voluntary affection, of love freely given and joyously received. Beautiful romances are transmitted into dull marriages; eventually the relationship becomes constrictive, corrosive, grinding and destructive” (“Changing Social Mores,” *Current*, February 1967, p. 48).

Those who encourage alternate life-styles regard the institution of marriage and the contemporary family relationship as obsolete, outmoded and just plain decadent. The family, they say, has few redeeming

features. They charge the typical family with being the primary causative agent in the creation of neurotic human beings. They also charge it with being hopelessly rigid and confining in terms of limited role models. Husbands, wives and children alike are constrained to follow certain preordained, inflexible patterns which are said to be constricting.

Traditional marriage limits legitimate sexual activity to one’s legal mate, and some consider this both unreasonable and unnecessary in a socially and technologically advanced society.

But are these complaints valid? It is certainly true that too many marriages are constricting, grinding, corrosive and destructive. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find blissfully happy marriages which are functioning at an optimum level in every respect. And overfamiliarity *does* often breed contempt within the family. Communication between family members can easily become routine—there’s nothing new to say after a certain point. When members of a family become “known quantities” to each other, every act, every word, every suggestion becomes a cliché. Life in the home can become boringly predictable and unbearably dull.

So these complaints by sociologists and others really do have some basis in fact. These experts are not just trying to create a family revolution in order to cater to their own anarchistic preferences.

But while the charges are not without foundation, it would also be a mistake to assume that the situation is hopeless. Marital problems are the clear result of cause-and-effect factors.

The nuclear family is too valuable as an institution—too much a part of the fabric of human society—to allow it to slip through our fingers without a fight. No one has offered a viable, equally prestigious alterna-

tive. No sociologist or anthropologist has arrived at a more satisfactory or superior way in which to structure tomorrow's societies. It is clear that the family must remain as the bulwark of the social order.

Who's to Blame? But who or what are we to blame for the symptoms of family break-down and decay we see all around us? Is the problem with the family institution itself—an institution that has survived nearly 6,000 years of recorded human experience with incredible viability? Is the problem that people today are so different from their forebears? Or are family problems a natural result of changing patterns in our society?

The fact that many of us now live in a technologically advanced industrial society provides a partial explanation.

Today's home—at least in the developed nations—is often a marvel of modern engineering. Since the Industrial Revolution, the principal skill a housewife must possess is the ability to push a button or plug a cord into a wall socket.

The modern housewife needs few of the domestic skills of her predecessors. No longer is it necessary for her to purchase food every day or to preserve meat with salt alone. She need not gather water at the well in the town square—she simply turns on the faucet and out it comes. She need not be inventive when it comes to entertaining the children, either. She can simply flip on the television and allow it to “babysit” her offspring automatically. All of these and many more conveniences—irrespective of whether they are intrinsically good or evil—combine to relieve her of the tasks that formerly made the home the time-consuming but fulfilling environment it once was.

O. Hobart Mowrer adds his observations of this situation: “. . . The availability of prepared foods and ready-made clothing has made the domestic skills of women much less important than they once were. And since we are now moving toward few rather than many children per family, even childbearing and the role of mothering are less satisfying and honored. As a result, women have increasingly sought employment outside the home, often in competition with and, hopefully, on an equal footing with

men. Homemaking and devotion to the interests of family life have thus often given way to absorption in a job or profession of some sort, which has created confusion and conflict with respect to role expectations and the division of labor between husbands and wives” (“New Hope and Help for the Disintegrating American Family,” *Journal of Family Counseling*, Spring 1975, p. 19).

So the Industrial Revolution has dramatically affected traditional marriage and family life.

Can the Nuclear Family Survive?

After reading this overview, one might be tempted to conclude that the nuclear family has “had it” as an institution; that it will never survive the twentieth century. It is true that the nuclear family as it operates today stands in need of reevaluation. It needs scrutiny, study and enhancement or it will surely continue to fail or break down in many cases. It is true that we need to isolate those cause-and-effect factors leading to such breakdown, and we must improve the education of potential young marrieds in order to arm them with knowledge and understanding. They must be taught what to expect—and not to expect—from marriage. They must be taught to balance pie-in-the-sky idealism against the hard realities of life.

But the nuclear family is far from ready for extreme unction. While it is in deep trouble, it still remains the only social institution that truly fulfills human needs both organizationally and emotionally. Betty Yorburg, writing in *The Changing Family*, optimistically predicts “the nuclear family will not only persist into the twenty-first century, but it will be stronger than ever.”

She adds that “optimal emotional gratification requires a stable, dependable one-to-one relationship between human beings. . . . This need for an enduring and secure source of emotional gratification . . . is a major reason why marital pairing relationships will persist in the highly automated America of the future, although for different reasons than in the past. These relationships will increasingly be sanctioned less by mutual economic necessity and conceptions of duty than by recognized psychological necessity.”

Yorburg concludes: “Marriage and the nuclear family will continue as basic institutions in human societies, functioning imperfectly and inefficiently, and sometimes malevolently, but persevering because it is not possible to come up with anything more workable to provide for the basic emotional needs of human beings—young or old” (*The Changing Family*, Columbia University Press, 1973, pp. 191-194).

Sam Heilig, psychiatric social worker and director of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center, concurs. He states that “only a family relationship—complete with marriage and kids—can provide people with the constant support they need, a sense of belonging . . .” (Bella Stumbo, “The Lonely Young—Their Isolation Can Be Deadly,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1975).

It may be said with utter certainty that the nuclear family is the best human institution we have. It really is the basic building block of any stable, godly society. But times have changed. The reality of today is different from the reality of Paul's day—or Abraham's. Technology has changed things. Social values and mores are different. Today's woman—not to mention today's man—have come a long way from their first-century counterparts.

Yet human nature remains what it always has been. And man is still a social creature. Man needs the stability provided by the traditional family setup. We all need a family base from which to launch our lives.

If we are willing to face the reality of life in these troubled times and honestly address ourselves to those very real factors which lead to family breakdown, there is hope. The family can have more meaning and efficacy as a social institution than ever before in history—if we are willing to *work* at making it successful and relevant to our age and time.

The family will survive. It has to.

But whether it survives in a crippled form—or whether it continues to exist on a transcendently higher plane than ever before—is entirely up to those who participate in the institution of the family.

The family is as good, or as bad, as we make it. □

SIX FAMILY FUNCTIONS

The Family Service Association of America has identified six major functions all families should possess as a common denominator. In brief, they are:

- 1) The basic biological function of reproduction and transmittal of a family's special heritage and culture from one generation to another.
- 2) The provision for physical security and protection.
- 3) The achievement of enduring and deep emotional satisfactions; the provision of full opportunities for emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual development.
- 4) The development of socially desirable character traits or moral and ethical standards.
- 5) The maintenance of order; the distribution of money and other material things, including the division of responsibilities and tasks among family members.
- 6) The development of sound relationships between family members and the outside community.

RANDOM VIGNETTES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY

• "Families are enduring institutions. They have been the foundation for virtually every society known to history. They possess incredible strength and resiliency, especially when faced with adversity. This was one of the major messages of the powerful television presentation of *Roots*. Yet, families are undergoing changes, and too many are experiencing stresses and pressures" (Vice-President of the United States, Walter F. Mondale, *Psychology Today*).

• "Documenters must deal with the statistic that one in three modern marriages ends in divorce. . . . There is also the observable fact that today the passing alliance is often the design for living" (Vernon Royster, *The Wall Street Journal*).

• "Today, 21 percent of all U.S. married couples have divorce somewhere in the background of one partner or another or both" ("Family—Special Section," *U.S. News & World Report*).

• "Many parents feel that their traditional values have had their day and are out of date. In order to stay in fashion, they have loosened up, but in so doing, they have come up with no new values. The result is that many children today live in a moral and emotional vacuum without any goals to strive for" (Naomi Alcalay, administrative supervisor of the Family Division of the Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service).

• "Even the upbringing of young children, once considered by social scientists the primary family duty, is being downgraded by an increase in the number of persons who decide not to have children at all" (Amitai Etzioni, *The Washington Post*).

• "It's those of another generation who don't even understand the principle of fidelity that I mourn for. What will the ripeness of years mean to them when the landscapes of their lives are strewn with the wreckage of dead romances?" (Page Smith, "A Few Words in Favor of Fidelity.")

• "Social workers in some areas point out that incest and other forms of child abuse are cited by 40 to 60 percent of teenagers and even younger children as their main causes for running away" ("Why Children Are Running Away in Record Numbers," *U.S. News & World Report*).

• "Children, who look to the family for love, security and a sense of direction, too often don't seem to find it. Many are aimless and al-

ienated, and alarming numbers of them have turned to drugs, alcohol, vandalism and violence" ("What Future for the American Family?" *Changing Times*).

• "It is the convergence of three major trends—the demand on parents' time outside the home, the demise of the extended family due to the frequent uprooting of its parts, and the liberation of women—that has put the challenge to the family structure" ("What Future for the American Family?" *Changing Times*).

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

"A family is a mobile strung together with invisible threads—delicate, easily broken at first, growing stronger through the years, in danger of being worn thin at times, but strengthened again with special care. A family—blended, balanced, growing, changing, never static, moving with a breath of wind—babies, children, young people, mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles—held in a balanced framework by the invisible threads of love, memories, trust, loyalty, compassion, kindness, in honor preferring each other, depending on each other, looking to each other for help, giving each other help, picking each other up, suffering long with each other's faults, understanding each other more and more, hoping all things, enduring all things, never failing! Continuity! Thin, invisible threads turning into thin, invisible metal which holds great weights but gives freedom of movement—a family! Knowing always that if a thread wears thin and sags, there is help to be had from the Expert—the Father—'Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.'"

—Edith Schaeffer (*What Is a Family?*, Hodder & Stoughton, \$7.00)

THE FUTURE OF FAMILY LIFE

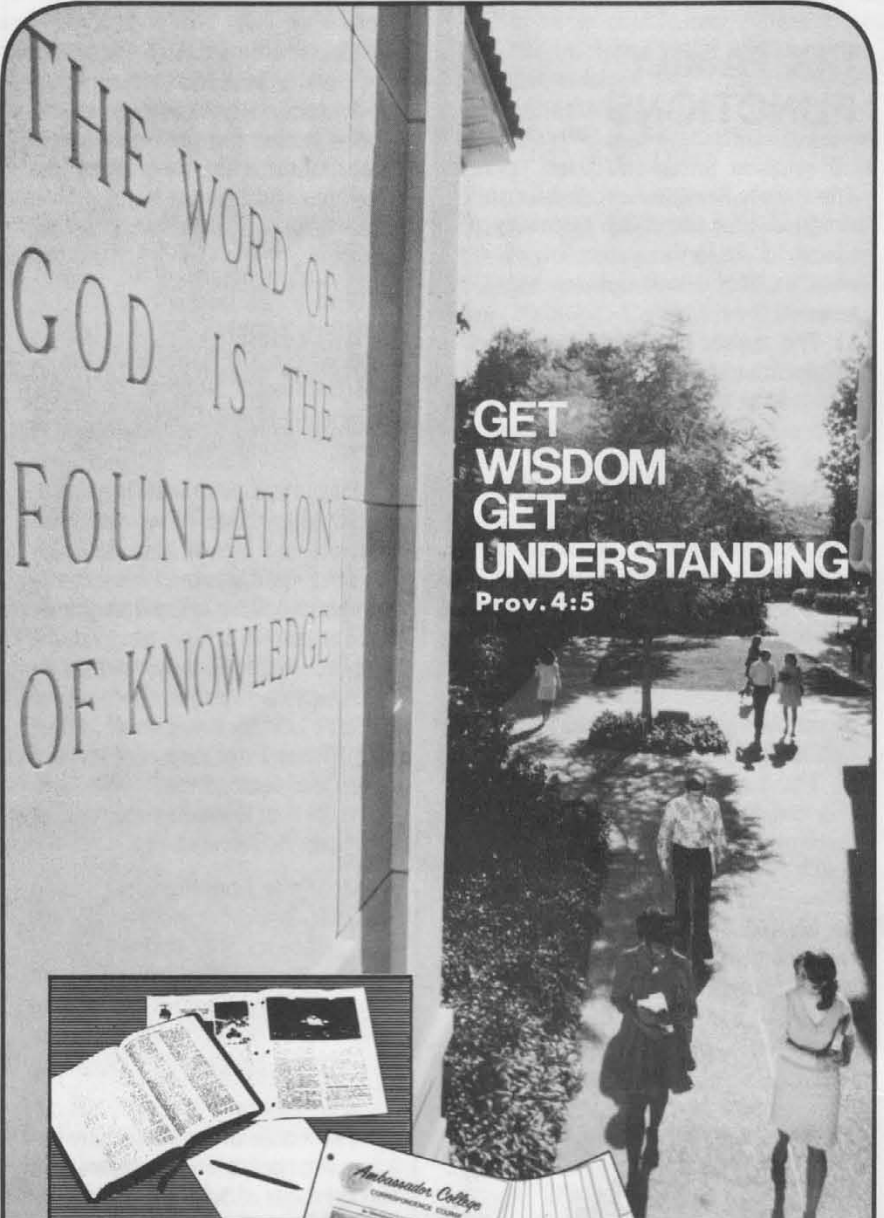
Family futurists are coming up with all types of terms to describe alternatives to the traditional family unit. Words like "progressive monogamy," "intimate networks," "pairings," "student marriages" are continually coined to describe all kinds of new "living arrangements."

Homosexual liaisons, communal families, group marriages, "pair-bound" arrangements, etc., are being taken up as alternatives by an increasing number of young people today.

But in the long run, Biblical revelation assures us that the family has a brilliant, glowing future on this earth. Indeed, the extended family has a vital and permanent place in terms of the future of human life—not because of the efforts of man, but primarily due to a loving and compassionate Creator who ordained the family unit in the first place.

Notice a specific prophecy about the fabulous future of the family. "Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain. Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets" (Zech. 8:3-5, RSV).

The growing gulf between parents and children is going to be filled up and the generation gap permanently closed! Malachi even describes a foretaste of this utopian condition now in our present age: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).



These are all the tools you need to improve your Biblical understanding



Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible is a NOW book. It is God's revelation to mankind — of the way to happiness, peace and prosperity. For more than two decades the Ambassador College Correspondence Course has been helping thousands to understand the Bible. This course explains the Bible by letting the Bible interpret itself. There are twelve monthly lessons of thorough, yet easily understood instruction — all absolutely free. Why not enroll today? Just send your request to the address nearest you. (See last page for address.)

NEGLECTED KEYS TO A JOYOUS MARRIAGE

Why does the honeymoon end so suddenly for many couples? Why do so many married partners simply "coexist" in the same house, but without the deep fulfillment they desire?

by Roderick C. Meredith

HER eyes flooded with tears, the woman before me began to shake and sob. Bending over with her face in her hands, she quietly moaned as she cried—finally catching herself, sitting upright and wiping her eyes. "I have always realized how empty my marriage was," she blurted out. "But hearing you describe in your talk today what marriage ought to be like makes me realize that I've just got to do better in my marriage!"

"What's wrong?" I inquired, asking the question in several different ways.

The Cause of Utter Despair. There were, of course, a number of things wrong. But obviously the deepest and most pathetic problem of all had nothing to do with sex, money or other widely publicized stumbling blocks to a happy marriage.

"My husband just won't talk to me," she said again and again. "I am lonely and frustrated. I don't even really know the man I married. I feel like I'm living with a stranger."

This case is typical of literally millions of marriages. Often, at least one of the partners *thinks* that they communicate. But the other partner, normally the woman, knows that they do not and feels alone and frustrated. She senses that she and her husband are simply coexisting in the same house. They do not necessarily fight and hurt each other physically or even verbally. But there is not the openness, the closeness, the total sharing of two lives, the love that there should be.

One authority on the subject quoted a woman discussing her ten-year-old marriage: "It's heart-break-

ing. Before I was married, I used to go out to restaurants and just by looking around the room I could tell who was married and who wasn't. Either the married couples were eating in dead silence, or the woman was gabbing away while the man ate and pretended she wasn't there. I swore that this would never happen to me—but it has."

Why such cases as the above? Why don't husbands and wives, of all people, communicate more fully to one another?

Hindrances to Total Sharing. Newly marrieds often work hard at learning and adjusting to each other's attitudes and preferences. They take pleasure in exchanging opinions on almost everything. After a few months, however, the opinions are all exchanged, the attitudes seemingly understood and the interest and excitement of "getting to know you" is over.

As the marriage continues and children come along, the wife's interest and talk is increasingly about her children and a myriad of domestic details which usually hold little or no interest for the husband. The couple often take for granted each other's attitudes on certain topics rather than even bothering to discuss them.

Most husbands care to hear only good news about their children, and are either irritated or bored if the wife confides in them the detailed problems involved in rearing their family. Wives usually miss their husbands most when the children are small. Having no adult in the house to talk to all day, such wives feel an urgent necessity to talk with their

spouse at night. But many husbands retreat behind their paper or quietly turn on the TV rather than endure what they feel is a boring "rehash" of household frustrations.

All of this sounds very natural and normal. Do you see anything *wrong* with it?

Perhaps not.

And the reason is that we have failed utterly in our modern society to teach the real purpose and meaning of marriage.

What Marriage Ought to Mean. A few years ago a popular and beautiful song expressed the thought "No man is an island."

That is exactly right.

Man without a mate, man without a life partner, is incomplete. Although many individuals—whether through necessity, ignorance or choice—go through life deprived of this relationship, their lives lack a vital element.

In the beginning of the Bible God says: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help suitable for him."

Man, throughout the Bible, means all humans. And *all* human beings need a partner with whom they can share their triumphs and sorrows, their laughter and their tears, their appreciation of a beautiful sunset—or the toothless grin of their firstborn child. They need to share—in fact, to be complete they *must* share—their plans, their hopes, their dreams.

Marriage presents a challenging confrontation where man must go beyond himself and develop in many ways. He then becomes a more mature and understanding human being. If a marriage is reduced to two

people merely coexisting, living under the same roof while remaining *separated* in their deepest hopes, feelings and aspirations, then that marriage has completely missed its goal.

Concept of Family Kingdom. Another important element in marriage is that of children. The family is the building block, the foundation of all decent society. And the strongest link in many a family is often its smallest member.

There is an old saying: "A man's home is his castle." This analogy should apply to his entire family, where he is the *king*; his wife, the beloved *queen*; and his children the royal princes and princesses who need *training* to fulfill their future responsibilities. So the parents enthusiastically work *together* to ensure that these future leaders are carefully nurtured, guided, disciplined and trained for the important roles they must play in years to come.

The intelligent and joyous blending of these two concepts in marriage—the open and loving union of the bodies, hearts and minds of the married couple, and the creation of the vital "family kingdom"—such a blending can and should produce an opportunity and an atmosphere where men and women can find complete fulfillment.

This fulfillment is pictured by the Psalmist: "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. . . . Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table" (Ps. 128:1, 3).

Put These Concepts to Work. Once you fully grasp these concepts relating to the meaning and purpose of marriage, why not set about building your marriage and your home around them?

Instead of the husband and wife being bored and disinterested in sharing each other's thoughts, both should be vitally interested in the miniature "family kingdom" which, *together*, they are energetically building. There should be a purposeful common interest in teaching and training their children, in improving their home and their financial position and in planning for the future. *Their* future.

For in a truly happy marriage, it is not "my house," "my car," or even "my paycheck." Rather, whether expressed in words or in total attitude, it *should* be "our house, our car, our income, our future."

And so the mutual attitude should constantly be forward-looking and planning for improvements in your "castle," your home. The wife's feelings, and her understanding and expertise in home decorating, landscaping, appliances, etc., should always be taken into account. Every major purchase such as a home or car should be a *family project*—affording the opportunity and benefit of a

There is no greater opportunity afforded on this earth to give, to share, to inspire joy and a sense of fulfillment in another person, than the opportunity of marriage.

sharing experience between husband and wife.

Nothing to talk about? No, *everything* to talk about and share. That is the correct answer.

Without being silly or unrealistic about it, husbands and wives should think of themselves as "partners" in a great adventure—in building a career, a business, a life, *together*. They should talk over details regarding their mutual allies—their friends, business associates and relatives. With the wife entering wholly into the discussion, they should plan their mutual strategy and discuss in detail what each can contribute to bring their goals in life closer to reality.

Then there are the children. What an area of discussion, planning, mutual problem solving and heartfelt sharing of hopes and dreams they provide!

When Tragedy Strikes. Of course all is not peaches and cream in *any* marriage. The husband may lose his job. One of the children may be seriously injured. Somehow, tragedy

seems to strike all of us in one way or another in the course of life.

If they meet tragedy *together*, man and wife will be drawn even closer. Often, a real setback will spark communication and a sense of sharing that may have been previously lacking. A couple need each other more than ever at such a time.

The willingness of each partner to sympathize and truly seek to *understand* his mate is paramount. Anything that can break down the barriers of pride, selfishness and coldness is serving a good purpose.

For a marriage without deep and heartfelt *communication* is no marriage at all.

Those who are thoughtless and selfish can easily find duties or distraction to avoid a heart-to-heart talk with their mate. Many married people fear this type of communication. They are somehow afraid of opening up in depth. They are always "too busy." They never find the time to truly explore the heart and mind, the hopes and dreams of the very one to whom they are united for life—one who may be practically bursting with desire to be included in the life and thoughts of her beloved.

Even when on vacation such individuals find distractions. And at home they may cultivate a circle of charming friends, friends who help fill in the time and enable them gracefully to avoid a long, completely candid, heartfelt talk with their mate.

In such cases, perhaps only a tragedy is enough to shock the insensitive partner into an awareness of his responsibilities. And, ironically, all too often it takes the tragedy of threatened divorce to bring the message home.

Why Married Partners Neglect Communication. A complete revealing of one's self requires a great deal of courage. People fear unveiling their inner selves and opening up to another human being, even to their mate, their doubts and fears as well as their hopes and dreams.

Why? They fear to be misunderstood. They fear ridicule or criticism.

Until a solid relationship has been slowly and painstakingly built over a

period of months and years, even married people avoid "telling all" to one another.

Yet, until this lack is rectified they can never truly be "one." There will always be an inner yearning for "someone" to whom they can truly unburden themselves and know that they will not be quickly or easily misunderstood.

Men are often more proud than women. They have greater difficulty in admitting that they are afraid.

By a harsh word or growl, a man may cut short his wife and terminate a conversation which he fears. A conversation which might unveil a part of his true nature if it were pursued.

Why?

We all fear being judged, being criticized, being misunderstood.

And many of us fear receiving unwanted and ill thought-out advice. Especially advice from a loved one, one who can hurt us deeply.

A husband may be experiencing a complicated problem in his work or profession. He hesitantly starts to share this deepest anxiety with his wife, something he has thought about and analyzed for months. Immediately she blurts out: "You should stand up for yourself like a man and take thus and such action . . ."

Her husband lowers his eyes and feels sick inside. "She didn't even wait to hear the whole problem!" he thinks. He feels that she treats him like a little boy with ready-made answers regarding something she knows nothing about!

He is crushed and defeated in his desire to find mature help and understanding regarding what may now be the biggest problem of his entire career.

But he is forced to withdraw, to change the subject, or to leave the room. His wife meant well, but she did not know how to listen.

To understand deeply another human being, we must learn to *listen*, and not reply. We must listen well—attempting to perceive the emotional colorings of the words as well as the words themselves. We must *take time* to allow our mate to unburden his or her heart to us, again and again. We must not offer criticism or judgement during this learning process.

We must fervently seek *to understand*.

There is a very close link between love and understanding. Because the very nature of true love is outgoing concern, true lovers always seek to understand, to encourage, to share the depths of their beings with one another.

What To Do. To all who would practice the art of total communication, of understanding, of love as outlined in this article, I have some suggestions which I give here in summary.

First, build a deep interest in the growth and fulfillment of your mate as a *person*. Some of the last quoted words of Jesus Christ found in the Bible are these: "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

There is no greater opportunity afforded on this earth to give, to share, to inspire joy and a sense of fulfillment in another person, than the opportunity of marriage. If each partner thinks, "How much can I give toward the joy and fulfillment of my mate?"—what a recipe for paradise!

Teach yourself to share and to communicate on the highest level. Take time for long talks together—perhaps including walking, hiking or cycling together over the countryside if you can. Plan to take short overnight or business trips *together* occasionally—leaving small children with *competent* family friends or relatives. Such trips should become "second honeymoons" and put new zest into your marriage.

Take holiday or vacation trips *together*. Do things that you can truly *share* and enjoy with one another.

At home, develop mutual interests and hobbies that you can share—gardening, stamp or coin collecting, concert going, or a collection of classical recordings.

It matters not what it is as long as you *share* it by the hour with one another. As long as it is a vehicle to stimulate a deeper closeness and understanding between you and the most precious individual on the face of the earth—your mate.

You Should Dream and Work Together. In your walks and talks and laughter and tears, go back in retrospect, *together*, and relive the thoughts of a young boy who sat on a hillside, looking at the sky, and

dreaming of the future. Discuss and analyze those dreams lovingly and understandingly with one another. Then work and pray together to make them come true.

In like manner, relive the hopes and aspirations of a young girl who often walked alone at sunset across her father's fields—dreaming of a husband and home of her own someday, of children, security, warmth, laughter and joy. Be sure you work *together* to make *her* dreams come true.

Learn to *respond* to one another—openly and lovingly. Have no secrets. Bear no grudges. This is your only life, your only mate, your only love, your only family. Learn to think and feel in unison, solving all your problems *together* as a team. The mutual encouragement and stimulus you'll feel, the added warmth and love you'll experience, will add an extra dimension of understanding and purpose and joy to your life that cannot be obtained in any other way.

Truly, "it is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). □

Is marriage obsolete?

Is marriage, like the Brown Pelican, in danger of extinction? Depending on which expert you consult, marriage is either (a) declining, (b) already dead, or (c) making a mild comeback. In any case, there's been a major shakeup of values. The important thing is: what does this mean to *you*? Whether you're single, married, or contemplating divorce, you'll find the booklet *Why Marriage?* most helpful. It's free—just write to one of the addresses on the back cover.



OBEDIENT CHILDREN ARE NOT ENOUGH!

Some parents are making a fatal mistake in their child rearing and heading for heartbreak in the years ahead. You could be one of them. If making your children obedient is your only goal, you will probably find yourself with an uphill battle for 10 to 20 years, ending with disappointment and a generation gap.

by Robert E. Fahey

What do you wish to accomplish in training your child? Have you ever stopped to consider?

What overriding goal do you have in mind as the ultimate end point of approximately twenty years of feeding, clothing, protecting and teaching your offspring from infancy on through childhood and the teenage years?

Unless you can see and consciously work toward the right goal, good results cannot be guaranteed.

What is the Right Goal? The overall purpose of your child rearing should be to develop your children into balanced, happy, mature, well-adjusted, godly adults. They will need to become capable, reliable persons prepared for the responsibility of adulthood, and the problems of adulthood. Ideally they should be able to take their place in society without the hang-ups and complexes you have had to fight all these years! That should be your overall goal.

So how would you approach such a goal? Obviously the best of all examples to look to is that of your spiritual Father. God Himself is the ultimate Master in right child rearing.

More Than Just Punishment and Obedience. Some parents seem to think their only job is to discipline. They seem to feel the only thing that counts is obedience. Why? Actually it's often because they are so selfish. Such parents just want their children to stay out of their hair—to not “bother” them. Others may strive to have obedient children for vanity's

sake. When friends or relatives visit, they show off. “Sit down!” “Go to your room!” they bark. Their children obediently trot off to bed. Guests are supposed to be impressed.

But what if the only way God worked with you was through discipline? What if every error received a sound whack? What if every wrong thought, selfish act, foolish mistake resulted in so many swats? What if not one sin passed unnoticed, and there was no warmth, no love, no evidence that God was concerned for you, except for a continual rain of swats, spiritual spankings, and a constant stern “no” booming in your ears?

You would become so discouraged, so despondent and terribly unhappy, that if you didn't openly rebel, you would turn inward, and your personality would shrivel up. You would feel that you could never really accomplish what your Father expected of you. And so you would probably quit trying—except just enough to keep from getting “swats.”

Your children will react the same way if treated that way! And you will someday wonder why your children, who seemed so obedient as youngsters, have become so distant, so heartless and unfeeling, as adults.

Discipline alone will not work! Some parents have tried it and ultimately have come to say something like this: “I have spanked him till I am blue in the face and he still doesn't obey me.” Something important is lacking.

Your spiritual Father is known for His love and mercy. Even when He punishes. He doesn't give you what you really deserve. Rather, His heart is turned toward you. He forgives. Do your children think of you as merciful, like your heavenly Father? Is your heart turned toward them and their hearts toward you, with warmth, trust and affection?

A prophesied characteristic of God's end-time Work, bearing to the world the last warning message before Christ's return and preparing the way for His appearance, is expressed in the prophecy of Malachi 4:6: “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers. . . .”

Is your son's or daughter's heart turned toward you? Is yours turned toward him or her? If not, your basic approach to child rearing is wrong.

God gives you more than mercy. He constantly works to encourage you. He makes you laugh joyfully. He rewards your efforts with blessings, leading you gradually along the right way. This is the way you must lead your children.

Child rearing is synonymous with love and character building. Discipline is part of both. But so are encouragement, affection, listening and positive instruction. If temporary obedience is your goal, and you use only discipline to get it, your children may flee from you when they are able, just as the inmates of the concentration camps fled from their

Nazi persecutors whenever they had the chance.

Many children have run away from home because of the intolerant behavior of parents. Each week thousands of children run away from their homes all over the world. Don't push your children into making a similar mistake which they'll regret later. Don't make discipline your only form of child rearing!

Training in Making Decisions.

When your child is a baby, you must make all his decisions for him. You decide what he will eat, what clothes he will wear, where he will go and when. As he gets older, you can give him more freedom in these areas. Still maintaining overall supervision, you should gradually widen the area in which you let him make decisions.

Let your child decide what colors to use in his coloring book. Then, what clothes to wear. Still later, give him a chance to decide how to spend part of his savings or allowance.

Let him even decide to buy something, occasionally, that may be a waste of money. Better for him to waste a little when he is young and learn from it than to lose much more when he is older, with the responsibility of a wife and child of his own. Unfortunately, many have not learned the right use of money until the stakes are so high that permanent damage is done to their marriage and financial security.

God is teaching you to decide—on your own. He calls it building character. He guides you, giving you the principles involved; warning you that obeying His laws brings blessings, and not obeying them brings curses. He gives case studies in His Word. He even commands you to choose His way. But the final decision is in your hands. As God's son or daughter, you must decide—and bear the consequences of your decisions.

So teach your children to make decisions. When they start school, they will have to decide with which friends to spend time, what books to read, and later, whether to engage in premarital sex and drug use. You will not be there to guide them at each crucial, decisive moment. They will have to decide by themselves. Equip them for that ahead of time! Give

them practice now in making sound decisions.

The key is to have areas in which your child can feel free to make up his own mind. You decide whether he should put his hand into a fire. You dictate to him about going into the street. Those areas are not for him to decide for himself. But is it really so crucial which playsuit he wears? Or which toys he plays with, as long as they are suitable for the time and place?

Your daughter may feel she has invented a new way to sew. You know it won't work. Explain it to her. Show her why it won't work, without mocking her for coming up with such

Is your son's or daughter's heart turned toward you? Is yours turned toward him or her? If not, your basic approach to child rearing is wrong.

a childish idea. If she doesn't feel you know what you are talking about, let her try it! When it doesn't work for exactly the reasons you said, she will learn more than sewing.

And she will see you aren't as ignorant as she might have thought—which will be crucial for her when she is seventeen and deciding about avoiding drugs or sex before marriage—or whether to marry Freddie anyway when you tell her it would be a bad match.

But leave off the "I-told-you-sos" which only serve to tickle your vanity and widen the gap between you and your child.

Main Principle of Rulership. You are the ruler of your child. But you need to realize the cornerstone principle for God's type of rulership. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them," said Jesus Christ. "But *it shall not be so among you*: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him

be your *servant*" (Matt. 20:25-27).

Have you ever thought of it this way? You are your child's servant. You are to serve him by preparing him for adulthood—not like a demagogue who will not tolerate any difference of opinion, nor any delegating of decision making, but like a wise teacher, instructing your child in the ways to make proper decisions. He can only learn that by practice. And practice implies some mistakes. Your job is to make sure they are little mistakes, not life-shattering ones.

How much better it is to serve the children God has given you by helping them to learn that they do need their parents' advice as they walk the road of life. How much better that they learn that when mom and dad say "no," there is usually a very good reason. They have seen the proof. Let them get used to admitting, "I was wrong," without shame or jeering.

If you rule your children Christ's way, they will want your rule. They will learn it is for their good. They won't feel fettered by it, as if bound in a straitjacket. They will be free in it. They will respect you for it. And God will guarantee them a long, happy life for respecting their parents (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3).

What To Teach Your Child. There are many other things to teach your child to prepare him to be a godly adult.

First, teach him to express himself. You can do this by letting a smaller child go over the day's events before bedtime. Sure, listening to him recount an event that happened while you were at work can require patience—but it's often profitable to the storyteller.

You should also teach your child to express himself by listening to and answering his questions—not squelching them. Treat his "foolish" questions with respect. A question that sounds nonsensical to you must have been in his mind before it came out of his mouth. And if it was there, it needs an answer!

Also, one question lays the groundwork for others. Sometimes the proper answer to one of these questions, if heeded, will save the child untold trouble. Too many parents squelch the "silly" questions, so they never

get a chance to hear the big ones!

Third, teach your child to do things. Ever see a young boy standing awkwardly beside a swimming pool while all his friends are swimming enthusiastically? He can't swim. He is self-conscious. An outsider. And *very unhappy*. He is also losing valuable leadership training. Avoid allowing inferiority and other personality complexes to form—teach him to develop talents and abilities, such as swimming. Give your children opportunities to engage in sports, recreational activities, etc. that will give them confidence within their peer groups. Teach them to make things, such as cookies and doll clothes for the girls and model airplanes and boats for boys. Go on hikes, picnics; buy a kite and help them fly it; take them to sports events.

Fourth, develop your child's interests as fully as you are able. His whole life will be richer. He will be able to mix with all kinds of people and realize his full leadership potential.

Fifth, teach him the proper use of power. Money is a form of power. Your child should learn how to use it wisely. A car is power. So is a boat, roller skates, BB gun or a bicycle. Children will misuse these unless trained.

Sixth, teach your child to face trials bravely. A broken toy can be a major crisis if you're four. So can a dead pet. Take time to put these "trials" into perspective. A broken toy can open the door for you to explain the importance of buying quality items, or proper care of possessions, or even principles of maintenance and repair. The dead pet is different from a dead human. Teach your child the difference. Just sitting down and explaining the overview will take much of the sting out of the "trial." It also helps narrow any potential generation gap.

Your own example in facing your trials is also important. If you are dressed to go out and your child spills milk down your best outfit—you have a trial. If an otherwise calm and composed mother suddenly becomes a screaming witch, hurling abuse at a glass-shattering pitch, her child will learn by example not to face trials bravely. He will also tend to fly apart in the face of trials.

Actions speak louder than words. If you expect your child to stand firm in a crisis, you must stand firm first.

Teach Them to Face the World. You should also teach your children that there are problems in the world—horrible, heartrending problems. Then demonstrate that God has the answers.

If someone becomes ill or involved in an accident, there are reasons—usually easily defined. Teach your child. Show him the principle of cause and effect. Show him how to avoid the effect by following God's way of life in the first place. Older children will see pregnant girls drop out of school. Show them the effect on the girl, her family, the boy and his family, and even on the unborn child itself.

But take care! All children are idealistic. They view the world through rose-colored glasses, and it's a good thing they do. If any of us could see all the evil, and all the trials and problems ahead of us, at once, we would feel defeated before we start.

The rose-colored glasses gradually have to go. But remove them gently; don't rip them from a child's face.

If you tell your child how rotten the world is, he will likely not believe it is so bad. And there is no purpose served by shouting, "You wait till you have to earn your own living. It's tough out there!" What you say is true. But you will make more progress by positive instruction. Show the fruits of the wrong way. When all the facts are presented in an atmosphere of reason, few children will knowingly and imperiously choose the automatic curses of the wrong way.

It is up to you to maintain an atmosphere of reason. If you continually discourage your child, he will become bitter and resentful. Then he will become more susceptible to wrong influences. You must maintain an atmosphere of reason by being reasonable and fair yourself. God says—and let's always remember it—"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Col. 3:21).

How to Teach Obedience. Finally, you should teach your children obedience mainly by setting them an ex-

ample of respect for the laws of God and man. Teach them to respond quickly when instructions are given. Be sure you have your child's attention, then tell him what you want him to do. Back up your words with discipline if necessary—in love.

Above all things, don't constantly use the phrase, "How many times do I have to tell you . . . ?" or "Do you want a spanking?" or "If you don't do as I said, I'm going to . . ."

That is not effectively teaching obedience. Instead, you are encouraging delayed response, teaching the psychology of last-minute escapes and the deathbed repentance syndrome.

You should teach your children the principles behind obedience. In your regular Bible studies, point out the clear lessons of what happened to those who obeyed God and those who disobeyed. Always stress this vital principle so that the lesson is driven home.

Remember your real goal is long-term, willing obedience. It is not something short-term like getting your child to go to bed. You certainly cannot expect real lasting obedience to God or man if you take such a shortsighted approach.

Keep your long-term goal in mind. Solomon described it: "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things" (Prov. 23:15-16). Solomon saw the proper goal was more than temporary obedience.

When your child is no longer a child; when he reaches maturity and enjoys a life of happiness, balance, wisdom and sound judgment, without the cares and kickbacks of disobedience, then you can say that your child training has been a success. You will have accomplished the real goal of child rearing! □

RECOMMENDED READING

The Worldwide Church of God publishes an attractively printed booklet entitled *The Seven Laws of Success*. Your children need to know about these seven principles. They apply to virtually all age groups. Write for your free copy.

WHY NOT COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR KIDS?

by Jon Hill

CHILD psychology books tell us that a child of 18 months to two years old has one favorite word: "No!" Come here: "No!" Shut the door: "No!" Eat your cereal: "No!"

The first real communication frustrates the parents—not to mention the child.

Why is "No!" the favorite word? Probably because that is the most often heard word the child is familiar with, because the parents have been using it most frequently for the preceding 18 months! In order to protect the child as he begins to crawl, and later walk, it is necessary to tell him "No!" Don't put everything on the floor into your mouth. Don't get near the fireplace. Don't touch the porcelain birds on the coffee table. All the no-no's are well established. The yes, that's fine, good boy, good girl statements we make are rare if not missing totally.

So the child figures "No!" must be the way to communicate. Parents give up too soon because of this first negative conversation—which may not seem to be a conversation at all. TV takes over as the educator, mother, father, baby-sitter. The child learns many wrong things through this medium. After it is too late, we try to control the viewing. That only anchors the negative approach. But how can you reason with a child? He won't understand.

Despite the fact that the child's next favorite word seems to be "Why?" we fail to recognize an effort at meaningful communication. We substitute lies and myths for true answers. The stork. Santa Claus. The bogeyman. Meanwhile sex, violence and cartoons on TV have communicated inaccuracies and total confusion regarding the real world. Our child learns—but mostly the wrong things, answers and solutions.

We give up. Maybe school will help straighten him out—after all, teachers are supposed to teach, aren't they? But by now it's probably too late. The child knows he has not received meaningful answers from his parents; he's coy and shy in even discussing (advanced communication) his real questions because he's been told he won't understand even if he's told; or to wait till he's older; or we don't have time now (and probably never

will); or don't disturb me, I'm busy; can't you do anything right?; etc.

Now the communication offered by TV contributes to the sum total of ignorance of all the kids put together, and they share their fogged knowledge with each other—don't trust anyone over ten! They've learned you can't really talk about the things you want to with your parents, the teachers, any adults—they just put you off, don't give right answers, don't understand.

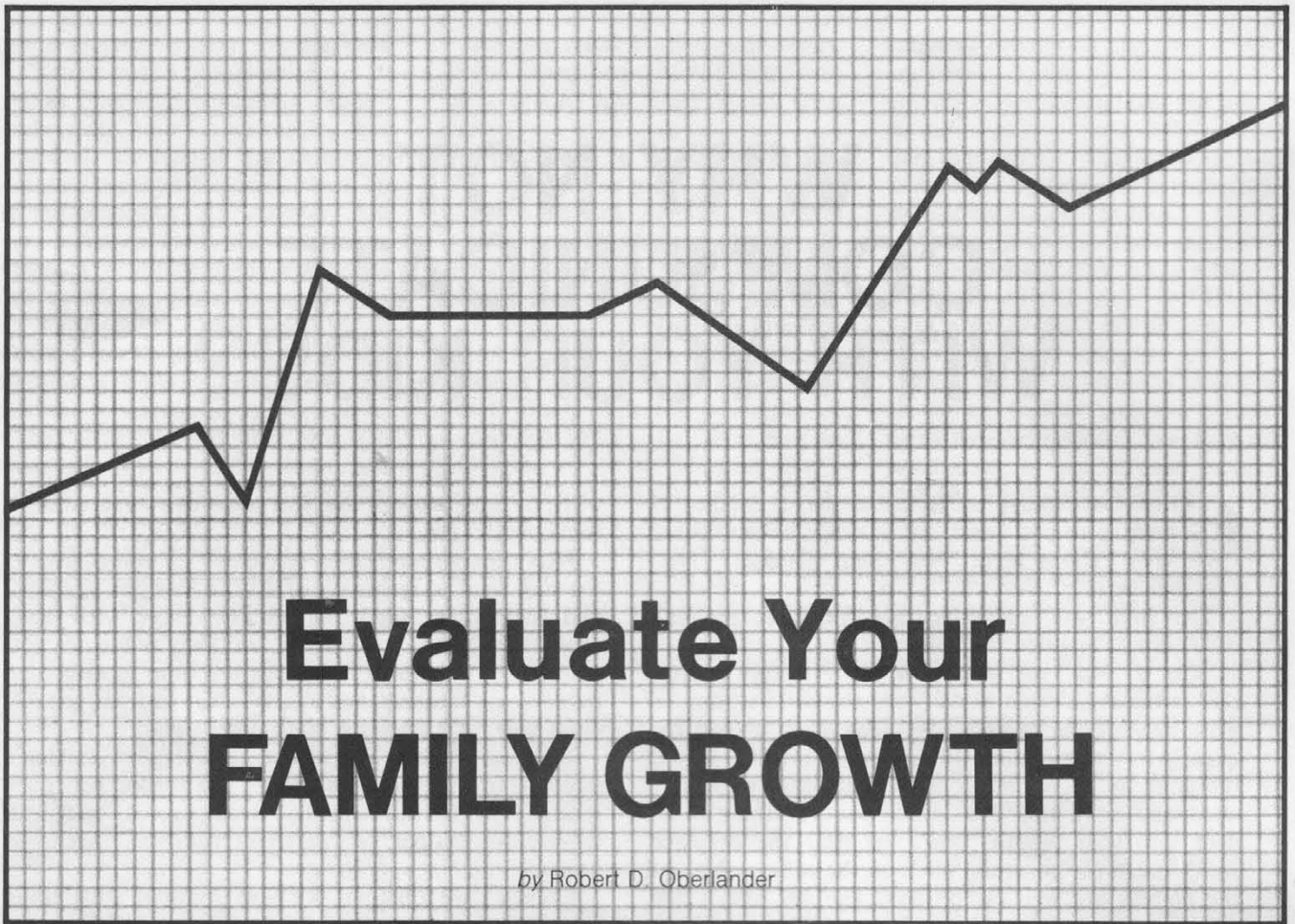
Bad goes to worse and we end up saying we just don't understand why the child doesn't like school, gets poor grades, why he runs with the "wrong crowd," gets into trouble, smokes pot, gets pregnant, runs away, seems to hate us.

Children are a bother. We have forgotten what Jesus said: "Let the children come to me, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as they. Don't send them away! I tell you as seriously as I know how that anyone who refuses to come to God as a little child will never be allowed into his Kingdom" (Mark 10:14-15, *The Living Bible*).

We hope God, our Father, will listen to us when we seek His help, guidance, answers. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. Ask and you shall receive. All those are positive responses from God. He doesn't tell us to wait till we are perfect so we will understand. He forgives our imperfections and patiently listens, and through His Word offers real answers to our problems.

There's a saying: "Talk is cheap." But it's not true. Talk is very expensive. It takes time, concern, care, thought, love. Kids know more than you think. Don't underestimate them. If they don't understand your first answer, phrase it in different words; if they don't understand your second answer, phrase it in different words; and on, and on, and on. Soon you will be communicating. Give them the benefit of the doubt and they will do the same for you. Give them your time and they will give you theirs when it really counts. Trust them and they will return the trust. Give them real answers and they will always come to you with their questions—and all their questions are important, because the answers are going to form the basis of their lives.

Try it. Why not communicate with your kids? □



Evaluate Your FAMILY GROWTH

by Robert D. Oberlander

The alarm sounds, and signs of life begin to emerge from within the Rogers household.

Scott's been up since 6:30, trying to make it to high school band practice on time for a change. Eddie, who's studying advanced physics at the university, is contemplating the relative relationship between perpendicular placement and the causal effect of obliquity. (He's deciding if getting up is worth the effort.) Cathy, a lively 12-year-old, hops across the cold floor to sit in front of the furnace, all the while complaining of frostbite.

Soon mom, dad and all the kids are scurrying around in a frenzy of activity, and the pace won't subside until the middle of the day.

Too many days in too many households begin just as portrayed above, family members rushing here and there, until the days have turned into years, and the family is no longer together.

It's been said that life is a rat

race—and the rats are winning. Even though life does have its frantic moments, it shouldn't be that way continually.

Meaningful time together. Spending time together as a family can make life so much more rewarding. But it should be meaningful time, relevant to the needs of each member of that family. To insure positive growth, we occasionally need to look at ourselves as a unit, to evaluate our progress and plot a course for the future.

The apostle Paul tells us to redeem the time in Ephesians 5:16. That is to say, we ought to make the most of every opportunity we have for Christian growth. Not only as individuals, but as a family.

That growth can only come if we separate ourselves from our everyday chores and take stock of where we are headed.

If there is a lack in showing the fruits of living God's way of life, if there is an empty hole where family

communication should be, then we need to recognize our weaknesses and build on our strengths.

Strive for the right direction with a desire to build a strong and meaningful family relationship based on God's way of life.

"... for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," says Paul in Galatians 6:7. What is more fertile ground for Christian growth than the family? Its trials and tests offer us many opportunities to display the type of character God wants us to have.

Once this realization fully hits us we need only, as some say, to "get some sowin' going" to reap a bountiful harvest that only family love and togetherness can bring.

Analyze your family. So how does your family stack up? Take some time for a family self-appraisal to find out. By looking at our family life objectively we can gain a new outlook on how it really is as compared to how we would like it to be.

Family Self-Appraisal Inventory

(Instructions: Rate yourself on each point on a scale of 1 to 10.)

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

- Do you show the fruits of the Spirit:
- Love (genuine concern for the welfare of others)
 - Joy (cheerful, positive outlook)
 - Peace (emotional stability, tranquility)
 - Longsuffering (patient)
 - Gentleness (sensitive)
 - Goodness (kind, considerate)
 - Faith (trust in God, confidence)
 - Meekness (humility)
 - Temperance (self-control, moderate)
- Do you:
- Pray regularly
 - Study regularly
 - Set an example through personal growth and maturing
 - Take part in Church activities
 - Instruct and guide your children

Total your score for this section and divide by 14 to get your comparative rating on a scale of 1 to 10.

INDIVIDUAL GROWTH

- Do you:
- Get enough sleep
 - Exercise regularly

- Eat well-balanced meals
- Develop new skills and hobbies
- Maintain a neat appearance
- Read regularly
- Make learning a lifetime activity

- Are you:
- Confident and positive
 - Dependable

- Do you:
- Encourage your spouse's self-improvement activities
 - Show interest in children's schoolwork
 - Guide your children in making their own decisions
 - Praise your children's achievements

Total your score for this section and divide by 13.

FRIENDSHIP AND SERVICE

- Do you:
- Visit friends and relatives, especially when they're sick
 - Provide warmth and support when others need help
 - Know and like your neighbors
 - Keep current with your community's affairs
 - Know your children's friends

Total your score for this section and divide by 5.

TEAMWORK

- Do you and your spouse:
- Share compatible values
 - Trust and respect each other
 - Resolve differences with love
- Do family members:
- Practice mutual support
 - Have constructive communication
 - Discuss and resolve disagreements constructively
 - Share family responsibilities

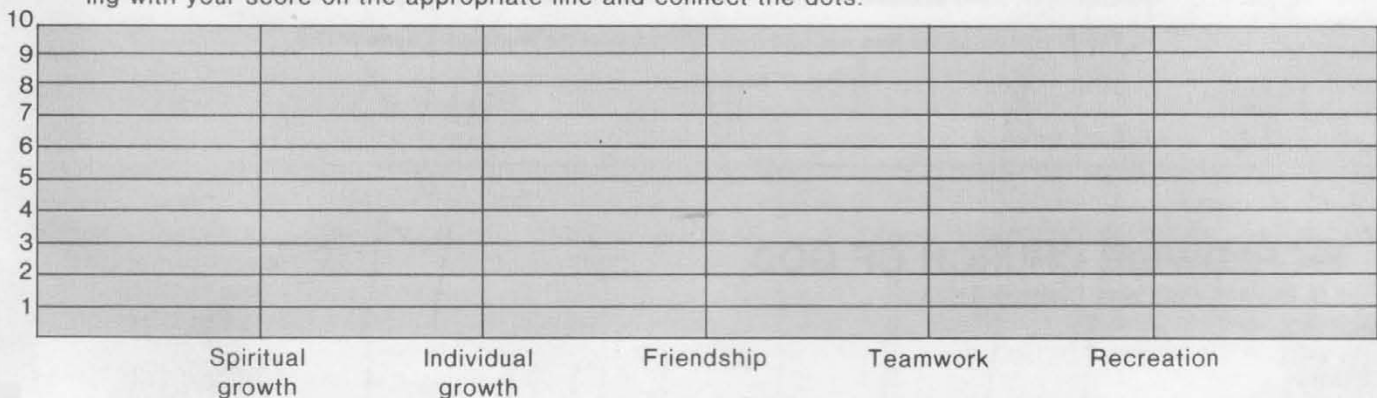
Total your score for this section and divide by 7.

RECREATION

- Do you:
- Spend time with your spouse
 - Spend time with your children
 - Keep up with your children's activities
 - Channel your children into wholesome hobbies and activities
 - Plan family recreation and outings
 - Try new activities together
 - Make wise use of TV as a family

Total your score for this section and divide by 7.

By following the instructions at the bottom of each section you can get an average score for that part on a scale of 1 to 10. This average score can then be plotted on the profile below. Just place a dot corresponding with your score on the appropriate line and connect the dots.



To help in this self-analysis, we would like to share with you a brief work-sheet, designed to aid you in taking a family inventory. This is not a test, but it is a tool that can help us all take a fresh look at ourselves as a family.

You might enjoy rating each of the points listed on a scale from 1 to 10.

This can be done by dad, mom, even the kids or the family as a whole.

Take a look at five important areas—spiritual growth, individual growth, friendship and service, teamwork and recreation—and apply the questions to your family.

You may want to analyze your family now and then again in a

month or two to see what progress you're making. Though this is not a test, high scores can be encouraging, and low scores can point to areas for personal and family growth.

Remember to be realistic and fair. No family is perfect, but an accurate self-appraisal can help a good family become even better. □