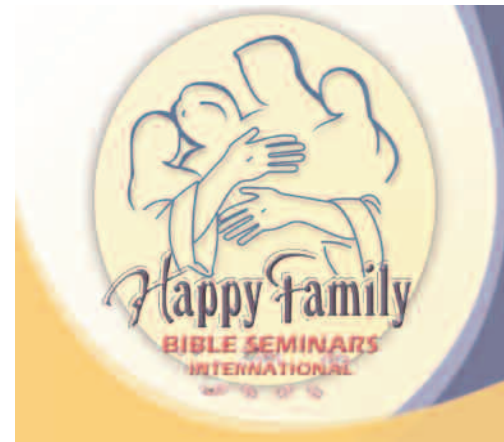


Three Big Secrets of a Happy Family



The beautiful wedding ceremony was in progress. Suddenly, as the couple knelt to pray, the congregation broke out into fits of laughter. What was the reason? Some mischievous person had painted in bold letters on the bottom of each of the bridegroom's shoes, the word "Help!" So when he knelt, the audience saw the soles of his shoes, and read his urgent call, "Help! Help!"

The truth is that every home needs help! Marriage is disintegrating at an alarming rate today! Whereas in 1900, one out of every 12.7 American marriages ended in divorce, by 1940 the figure had arisen to one in six, and by 1980 it had escalated to one in two! Since then, the ratio has not improved in the United States, and it is not very much better in some other countries of the world.

While the bad news is that families need help, the good news is that help is available! The Creator of the family has supplied us with a marvelous manual—the Holy Bible. Its ancient pages contain the answers to every modern family problem. In these seminars, we will explore profound principles and find practical answers within its pages.

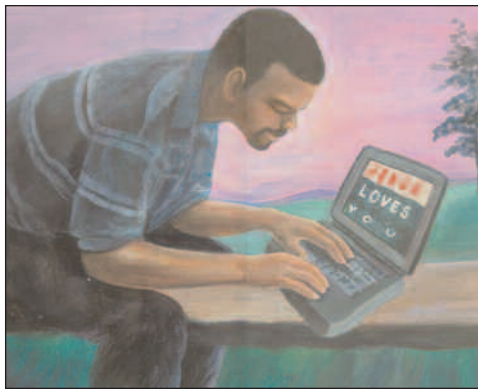


The 3:6 Principle

1. Jesus made a profound statement on love—love in three dimensions. Whom did He say should be a special object of my love? The answer is found in Matthew 22:39—“You shall love... yourself.”

Self love! Some people question it, but God endorses it. On one hand there is a bad

Click
Here!



Galaxy

All of the heavenly bodies we see in the sky belong to the Milky Way galaxy. Our solar system—with its sun, nine planets, thirty-two moons and 1,600 asteroids—is only one of the many systems forming the Milky Way. The extent of this galaxy is 100,000 light years. Since light speeds at 186,282 miles per second, it travels over 5,874 billion miles a year. Therefore, 100,000 light years would be 587,458 trillion miles! But as incredible as this sounds, it is the size of only one galaxy! The telescopes reveal that there are a hundred billion galaxies!

And these bodies operate with such mathematical precision that scientists calculate with accuracy the arrival of their space crafts on distant planets.

Could all this have appeared by chance? Could it all be sustained by caprice? Must there not be an intelligent Creator and an omnipotent Sustainer of this universe?

Adam's Wedding

A wedding ceremony requires vows of the couple and pronouncement of a marriage officer. Genesis 2:23 records Adam's wedding vow, "flesh of my flesh". But Genesis 2 does not tell us who spoke in verse 24 saying, "they shall be one flesh". In Matthew 19:4,5, however, Jesus states that it was God who spoke these words. How did Jesus know? He was present! (John 1:1-3) So, there was a wedding in Eden! God was the Marriage Officer. "God blessed them" (Genesis 1:28).

Recipe For Joy

Jesus	Jesus best of all
Other	Love your partner better than yourself
Yourself	Love Yourself

ANSWERS: 2. give; 4. forgetting; 5. T, F, T; 6. A2, B3, C1; 8. A3, B1, C2; 9. not, ourselves; 12. love, God; 14. A2, B1, C4, D3; 16. Lord, image; 19. called/invited; 21. myself, better, best.

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self love that displaces God and disgraces others, but on the other hand there is a good self love that aids healthy self worth.

2. Self esteem is vital to a successful marriage. Here is the simple 3:6 principle.

Acts 3:6. "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I _____ you."

This concept says: I can only give what I have. If I have three apples, I cannot give you six. But if I have six oranges, I can give you three. If I do not have love for myself, how can I share it with my spouse? If I am bankrupt of self esteem, how can I ever enrich my marriage? So the **first secret** of a happy family is **Love Myself**.



Self Esteem

3. Whenever I am tempted with thoughts of low self worth, here are six steps that I can take. First, Ask myself why?

Psalms 43:5 asks, "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?"

Try to find the cause. Is it because of childhood abuse? Or an unfortunate experience? Or feelings of being unloved? Or _____.

4. Then, I should put my past to rest.

Philippians 3:13, 14 says, "This one thing I do, _____ those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal."

If I dwell upon the nightmares of yesterday, I will have no dreams today and no visions of tomorrow. I cannot change the past, but I can influence my future!

5. Third, Recognize my uniqueness.

In Psalm 139:14 David declares, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Is it **True (T)** or **False (F)**?

- Of the billions of people alive, no one is exactly like me.
- Only my "twin" has my fingerprint, voice and DNA.
- Since I am special, I should value myself.

Regardless of my limitations, I am unique and precious to God. He says, "Since you are precious in My sight...I have loved you" (Isa. 43:4).

6. The fourth point is: Identify my strengths and put them to work.

Read **2 Kings 4:2-4**, then match each statement on the left with a statement on the

- Through Bible Study, I can make Him feel welcome.
- By songs of praise, I give Him an invitation.
- Each morning, I can do so alone with God.
- Better yet, we can do it together as a family.

It's still true: The family that prays together stays together.

Listen! Do you hear Him knocking?

In Revelation 3:20 He whispers, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

Will you accept His gracious invitation? _____ Will you do so right now?

21. So what are the three big secrets of a happy family?

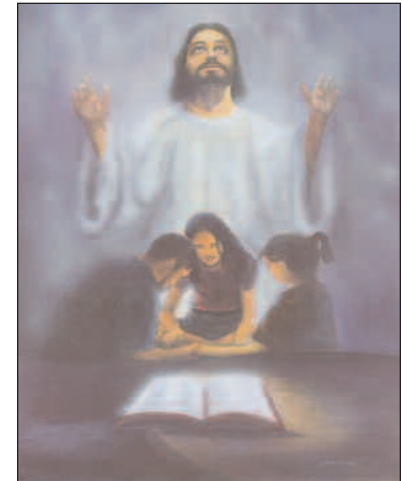
- a. Love _____.
- b. Love my partner _____ than myself.
- c. Love God _____ of all.

Then we will be a **Happy Family**.

My Promise

- I will maintain a positive picture of myself.
- I will please my marriage partner more than myself.
- I will spend time each day, welcoming the presence of Jesus into my home.

My name: _____



Seminar 2

Is It Really Love? Seven Ways to Tell

Some couples "fall in love," get married, and later realize that it really wasn't love! This seminar identifies seven differences between the counterfeit and the genuine, and offers three steps to true love.

Genesis 2:22-24 describes the ceremony. It was a gorgeous garden wedding! The chirping of birds, the fragrance of flowers, the babble of brooks, the singing of trees, the awe of animals and the anthem of angels—all were present in Eden. **Click: Adam's wedding.**



Since God is the Manufacturer of marriage, He knows about its maintenance. The Psalmist expressed this profound concept in Psalm 127:1—“Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.” While a couple is working to build a loving relationship, the devil is working to destroy it. But when partners enlist God’s help, they get superhuman power to resist the forces of Satan, and they can gain the victory. **So, the third and biggest secret is: Love God best of all.**

18. At the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-10), the couple had a problem. But Christ took care of the crisis!

- ✓ The problem was that the wine ran out.
- ✓ Jesus told them to fill the six pots with water.
- ✓ Then He turned the water into wine.
- ✓ His first miracle blessed marriage and the family.

As it were, the bridegroom held up his shoes crying, “Help! Help!” The good news is that Somebody was there to help!

Biggest Secret

19. Today, we too, face serious challenges in our families. Our jars of love and joy run out! But Christ can refill them!

Philippians 4:19 says, “My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”.

As He did for that couple at Cana then, Christ is ready to work a miracle for every family now! He will turn our water into wine, our pain into pleasure, our sadness into gladness.

How did Jesus come to be present in that home on that day?

John 2:2 tells us, “Now both Jesus and His disciples were _____ to the wedding.”

It was a special invitation! Suppose they didn’t give it? Embarrassment and sadness! But they gave it. And the result was miraculous joy and gladness!

20. And how can I invite Christ into my home today?

- In prayer, I can ask Him to be present.

right, and write the corresponding letter on the line.

- A. The prophet asked _____ He multiplied her asset.
 B. Single parent answered _____ What do you have?
 C. God performed a miracle _____ Only one jar of oil.

One of my strengths is _____

I can make it work for me by _____

Fifth, Think and talk positively. What can I tell myself?

Philippians 4:13 declares, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Fanny J. Crosby was blind from infancy. Yet she wrote 6,000 hymns which you and I, who see, can sing! With Christ, we can be “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8:37).

7. Finally, I should remember that God loves me. Look what He says!

Jeremiah 31:3—“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.”

Regardless of my challenges—physically, mentally, materially or spiritually—God loves me!

So the first secret is: Love Myself. Remember this: A happy marriage does not start with finding the right person, but with being the right person.

Second Self

8. Now let’s go to our second secret.

Matthew 22:39—“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

When the lawyer asked, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, showing that every human being is my neighbor. My spouse, therefore, is my nearest, dearest neighbor!

Why should I love my married partner as much as I love myself?

Ephesians 5:28 has the answer: “He who loves his wife loves himself.”



Match each statement on the left with one on the right.

- A. When I get married _____ I see my first self
 B. When I look in the mirror _____ I see my second self
 C. When I look at my spouse _____ I get another self

9. The great challenge of marriage arises when the needs of the two selves are different! When my partner’s needs conflict with mine, whom should I please?

Romans 15:1,2 tells us, “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and _____ to please _____. Let each of us please his neighbor [spouse].”

- The root of conflict is, “self first”.
- The key to conflict resolution is “spouse first”.

The **second secret** of a happy marriage is: **Love my partner better than myself.** By human power, this is impossible, but with divine power, all things are possible.

Examples

10. Now let’s have our Group Activity. Case study. The Thomas family was famous for its cucumber industry. While Jerry planted, experimented with and harvested award-winning cucumbers, Kathy became a specialist in pickling the produce, winning prize after prize for her pickles. Cucumbers bound their hearts together. Then tragedy struck. When father died, son Carlos offered to continue the crop. But surprisingly, Mother said no. “When I got married,” she explained, “I had no love for pickles. But when I observed that cucumbers gave Dad a special pride, I came to enjoy pickling them because I loved Jerry dearly.” In amazement, Betty added, “Dad told me that initially he had no passion for cucumbers. But when he saw Mom’s joy over her pickles, he became excited, because his life’s goal was to make her happy.” **What lessons can we learn from this story?**

1. _____
2. _____

11. And who is the greatest example of sacrificing love?

Romans 15:3 says, “For even Christ did not please Himself”.

Did Jesus enjoy Gethsemane? Was He eager to suffer on Calvary? Of course not! But you and I—the ones He loved—needed Him to die. So putting our joy above His own, He went to the cross. He, the Greatest Lover, is the Supreme Example for every lover. And having shown us this new level of love, He says to every couple, “Love one another; as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

Big Question

12. We now come to the final secret. What is it?

Matthew 22:37 says, “You shall _____ the Lord your _____ with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.”

But what does God have to do with marriage and family? One of today’s big questions is: Can we find any evidence for belief in a Creator?

While we cannot prove the existence of God in a laboratory, we can behold His awesome footprints.



First, let’s look at Biology.

One of the basics of Biology is: Life produces life. The doctrine of “spontaneous generation” was crucified by the eminent French chemist and biologist, Louis Pasteur. So, life emerging from inert matter poses a significant challenge.

Hebrews 11:3 declares, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command.”

13. Now let’s examine God’s footprint in Astronomy.

Suppose someone gives these instructions for making an aeroplane: Place aluminum, titanium and copper in a container. Then add fiberglass, plastic and rubber. Shake container forcefully until plane appears. Impossible! Why? Because every design requires a designer. So, let’s look at our complex universe starting with our galaxy. **Click: Galaxy.**

Psalms 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handwork.”

14. Then there is Morality—the universal heart cry for ethical behavior.

Try to match the following statements

- A. Standards of conduct are _____ existence of a moral Mastermind.
 B. Such standards are built _____ indispensable to a stable society.
 C. Norms allude to the _____ on ethical norms of right and wrong.

Romans 2:15 speaks of a “law written” on human hearts.

15. However, the grandest footprint of God is seen in the transformation of human lives.

From criminal to model citizen! From immorality to purity! From pride to humility! And both Scripture and history abound with examples.

We need to remember that a transformed human image requires a divine model.

2 Corinthians 3:18 identifies the model. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the _____ are being transformed into the same _____ from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

16. Its Group activity time:

- a. Can you think of any other footprints? What are they?
- b. Of all these footprints, which one seems most impressive?

Biggest Secret

17. After creating our planet, God made the first couple and married them.

