

*Families in the Family of God*  
**A Family of Families**

Lesson #1 for January 7, 2006

Scriptures: Genesis 2:18-25; 27:1-28:5; Matthew 10:35-37; John 17:11,21,22; Acts 9:17; 21:8,9; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 4:14,15; Galatians 4:5; 1 John 4:8,16.

1. Christianity has been defined by the word love. "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16) should be our central theme. Our Bible study guide begins by stating: "Love for God cannot be manifested in any other way than love for others." Why is love such a central issue in Christianity? Why is love so important in God's kingdom?
2. **What is the role of the family in teaching us about love?** Where are we supposed to learn about relationships and loving? Is there any better place to learn these things than in a loving Christian family?
3. Is it harder to be a Christian at home or in public, at church or at work? Would you agree with the statement "if you can be a Christian at home, you can be one anywhere?" If the home is the ideal place to learn love, why is it that so often it is hardest to "love" the people we live with?
4. The marriage relationship and the Sabbath are the two institutions that have survived from the days before sin. Did God intend for marriage to be specifically linked with the Sabbath? Why? Or why not?
5. Seventh-day Adventists have obviously championed the idea that the seventh-day Sabbath should be observed by all Christians. Have we done as well in promoting Christian marriage?
6. Do our three key messages found in Revelation 14:6-12 teach us anything about Christian marriage and the family? "Marriage and family, in their own way, also recall Creation, when a merciful Maker prepared a place for humanity to rest, a haven where the power of His love draws diversity into oneness, where a promise is a promise and commitment means commitment. This place of rest, this haven, is the home." (SSTBSG p. 3)
7. Do we often see truly Christian marriages and homes in our society today? Is it easy to maintain a truly Christian marriage and home in our world?
8. What was God's original plan for marriage? What instructions did he give to Adam and Eve? Did God teach them about the marriage relationship or in their perfect environment did He leave them to discover the delights, and work out the details of marriage for themselves? What marital responsibilities did Adam and Eve recognize before sin entered?
9. Ellen White has stated that: "**All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made 'in the image of God,' and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth. They were to live in close communion with Heaven, receiving power from the Source of all power. Upheld by God, they were to live sinless lives.**" *The Review and Herald*, February 11, 1902, par. 1; *Sons and Daughters of God* 7.2 1 SDA Bible Commentary 1081.3
10. Do you think God had created any other worlds with units of beings something similar to our families? If human beings are "a new and distinct order", does that mean that families were also "new and distinct"? **Why did God make humans "different"?**
11. Adventist theologians and commentators reviewing Ellen White's words have quite consistently believed that she is speaking about our ability to procreate. **Without the**

## **ability to procreate would there be a need to have families?**

12. Do the angels have small groups like families in their midst?
13. Based on Genesis 1:27,28 AND 2:18-25 what would you say was God's main purpose for creating the family in the beginning? **Is the family primarily for reproduction? Or companionship?**
14. Review in your mind what Satan has done to the seventh-day Sabbath! How successful has Satan been at attacking Christian family and values? **Contrast the "ideal" for the Christian family with the "families" that you see in our world today. Where are the real differences?**
15. What did God mean when he said, <sup>26</sup> "and now we will make human beings; **they will be like us and resemble us.** They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small." <sup>27</sup> So God created human beings, **making them to be like himself.** He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, 'Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control.'" (Genesis 1:27,28) Did Adam and Eve have any idea at the time what children were? Did God stop to explain it to them?
16. In our world today the more highly educated and affluent a couple is generally, the fewer and fewer children they are having. And many of these couples are having less than enough children to maintain their populations. **Many Western European nations and the same groups in North America are not producing enough children to replace themselves. Why do you think this is?**
17. Think back to your family when you were a child. What were the predominant characteristics of that family? For those of you who have grown to adulthood and have children yourselves, compare the home that you created for your children. Was it an improvement on your parents' home? In what ways?
18. When you think of your core family do you think first of all of companionship? When you think of the idea of a loving relationship does your core family come to mind?
19. If God wants us to be like Him, male and female, is it possible for us to be as close to each other as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are?
20. Even in Bible times there were different kinds of family structures. We think of the typical husband-and-wife family such as apparently was intended in Eden. Very soon after the fall polygamy entered and many Old Testament stories involve polygamy. Why do you think this is? What other types of family structures can you think of which are mentioned in the Bible? What about Ruth and Naomi? Paul, the apostle, or Jeremiah, the prophet, who never married? Hosea and Gomer? Mary, Martha and Lazarus? Lois, Eunice, and Timothy in Lystra? Could a "blended family" ever be a truly Christian family?
21. Many of the most famous conflicts in Scripture arose between family members! Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael, David and his sons, Jesus and His brothers, etc.. **Did God intend for us to develop sibling rivalry? Does that serve any useful function?**
22. Several types of family structures have been identified by experts:

**The institutional family:** the father functions as the patriarch and children are valued as people who can help to do work. This kind of family worked well in biblical times.

**The psychological family:** This type of family sets a high priority on personal achievement and happiness more than family obligations and tight community bonds.

**The pluralistic family:** people today would like us to believe that in addition to the traditional two-parent family there are other options such as the single-parent family, cohabitation, remarriage, and gay and lesbian families. These groups would like to emphasize flexibility in the family structure.

23. **What is God's attitude toward homosexuality?** What does the Bible say about homosexuality? See appendix.
24. How should our modern church deal with pluralistic families? Should we accept them as the norm for our society and move on?
25. How would you feel about living next door to a gay or lesbian couple? What if they chose to have or adopt a child? Would you be comfortable with that? Is there any evidence from Scripture for such things as same-sex marriages?
26. God's ideal seems to be to return to the Edenic pattern. One man and one woman living together in peace and harmony as **an intentional family**. Does a married couple need to have children in order for the family to be complete? Notice the pattern that the Bible suggests for the family: leave the parents; unite together; and become one flesh.
27. Can a single person be a family? Why? Or why not?
28. Paul wrote more than anyone else in Scripture about families. Yet during his active ministry he was not married. And what about Elijah, Anna, the prophetess, John the Baptist, Phillip's daughters, Jeremiah etc.. Some of these people were instructed to remain single! (Jeremiah 16:2; compare 1 Corinthians 7).
29. Why is it that we sometimes view single people as second-class Christians? Are there circumstances where some persons should remain single?
30. **Often Scripture uses family names and relationships to describe Christian relationships and principles. One of the most important ways God can teach us about why He does what He does is by giving us children to raise in the family setting!**
31. Was it God's intention that the family of God should include smaller family units of differing types?
32. Even Jesus had troubles at times getting along with his brothers! Why was this? Shouldn't Jesus have been able to get along with anybody? Do you think Mary and/or Joseph had any problems with Jesus when He was a teenager? Why? Or why not?

© 2005 Kenneth Hart M. D. **Permission is hereby granted for any non-commercial use of these materials. Free distribution is encouraged. It is our goal to see them spread as widely and freely as possible. If you would like to use them for your class or even make copies of portions of them, feel free to do so. We always enjoy hearing about how you might be using the materials and we might even want to share good ideas with others, so let us know.**

[khart@llu.edu](mailto:khart@llu.edu)

Last modified: January 1, 2006

C:\My Documents\WPISSTG-Hart\Families\SS-Families#1-2006-01-07.wpd

## **Homosexuality**

Leviticus 18:22 (*NLT*) "Do not practice homosexuality; it is a detestable sin.

No man is to have sexual relations with another man; God hates that. (*GNB*)

Leviticus 20:13 (*NLT*) "The penalty for homosexual acts is death to both parties. They have committed a detestable act and are guilty of a capital offense.

When a man has sexual intercourse with another man as with a woman, both men are doing something disgusting and must be put to death. They deserve to die. (*GNB*)

Deuteronomy 23:17 (*The Living Bible*) "No prostitutes are permitted in Israel, either men or women; you must not bring to the Lord any offering from the earnings of a prostitute or a homosexual, for both are detestable to the Lord your God.

1 Kings 14:24 (*The Living Bible*) There was homosexuality throughout the land, and the people of Judah became as depraved as the heathen nations which the Lord drove out to make room for his people.

Romans 1:27 (*GNB*) <sup>27</sup>In the same way the men give up natural sexual relations with women and burn with passion for each other. Men do shameful things with each other, and as a result they bring upon themselves the punishment they deserve for their wrongdoing.

1 Corinthians 6:9,10 (*GNB*) <sup>9</sup> Surely you know that the wicked will not possess God's Kingdom. Do not fool yourselves; people who are immoral or who worship idols or are adulterers or homosexual perverts, <sup>10</sup>or who steal or are greedy or are drunkards or who slander others or are thieves—none of these will possess God's Kingdom."

Ἡ οὐκ οἰδατε ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐκ ἔχοντες οὐκ ἔχοντες πορνείας οὐκ ἔχοντες εἰδωλολάτραι οὐκ ἔχοντες μοιχείας οὐκ ἔχοντες μαλακίας οὐκ ἔχοντες ἀρσενικοὶ ταῖς οὐκ ἔχοντες κλεψαῖς οὐκ ἔχοντες πλεονεξίαις, οὐκ ἔχοντες μεθύσεις, οὐκ ἔχοντες ἰδιωδοὶς, οὐκ ἔχοντες ἀφραγείας βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν. *Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 26<sup>th</sup> Ed.*

1 Timothy 1:9-10 (*NASB95*) <sup>9</sup> realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers <sup>10</sup> and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,

Jude 7 (*God's Word*) What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities near them is an example for us of the punishment of eternal fire. The people of these cities suffered the same fate that God's people and the angels did, because they committed sexual sins and engaged in homosexual activities.

7 ἡ δὲ Σόδομα καὶ Γομόρρα καὶ αἱ περὶ αὐτὰ πόλεις τῶν ὀφθίων τῶν ἐκπορνεύσασαι καὶ ἀπέλογασαί οὐκ ἔχοντες σάρκα, ἕτερα, προκείνται δεῖγμα πύρου, αἰώνιον διὰ τὴν ἀπειθείαν. *Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 26<sup>th</sup> Ed.*

Revelation 22:15 (*JNT*) 15 Outside are the homosexuals, those who misuse drugs in connection with the occult, the sexually immoral, murderers, idol-worshippers, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

<sup>15</sup> ἔκω οὐκ ἔχοντες καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντες φάρμακοὶ καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντες πορνείας καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντες εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ παρὰ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τοὺς ἔργους. *Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 26<sup>th</sup> Ed.*