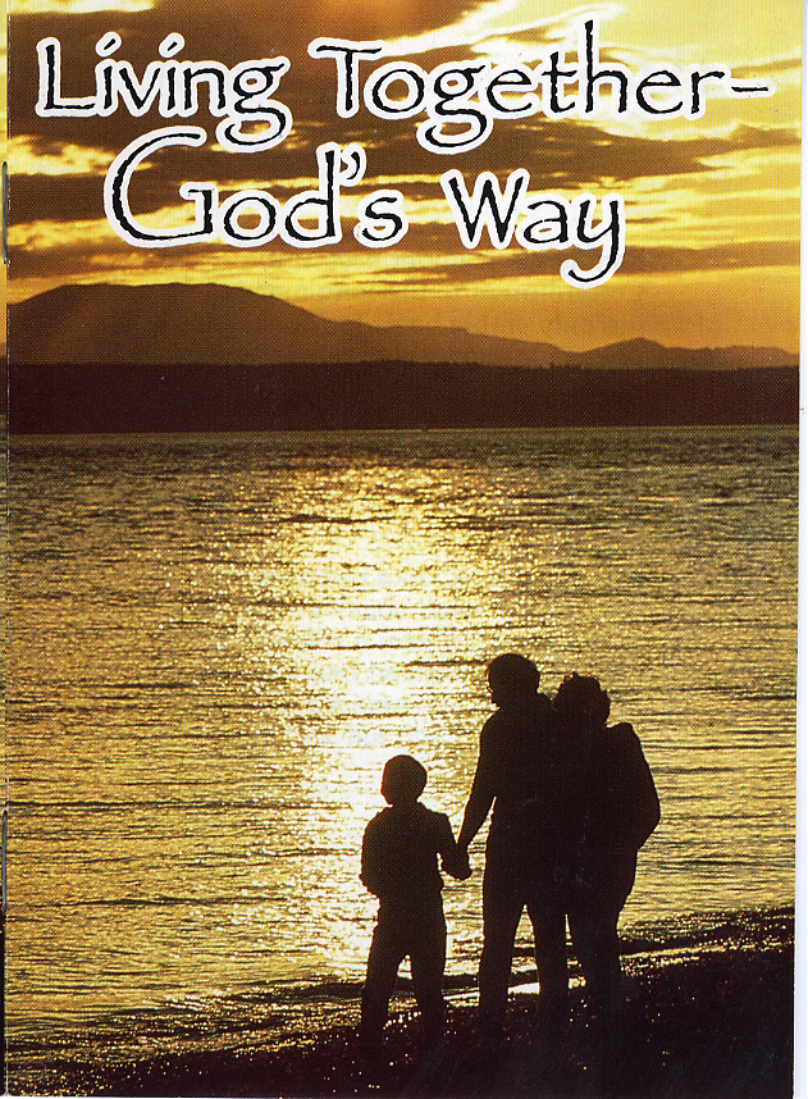
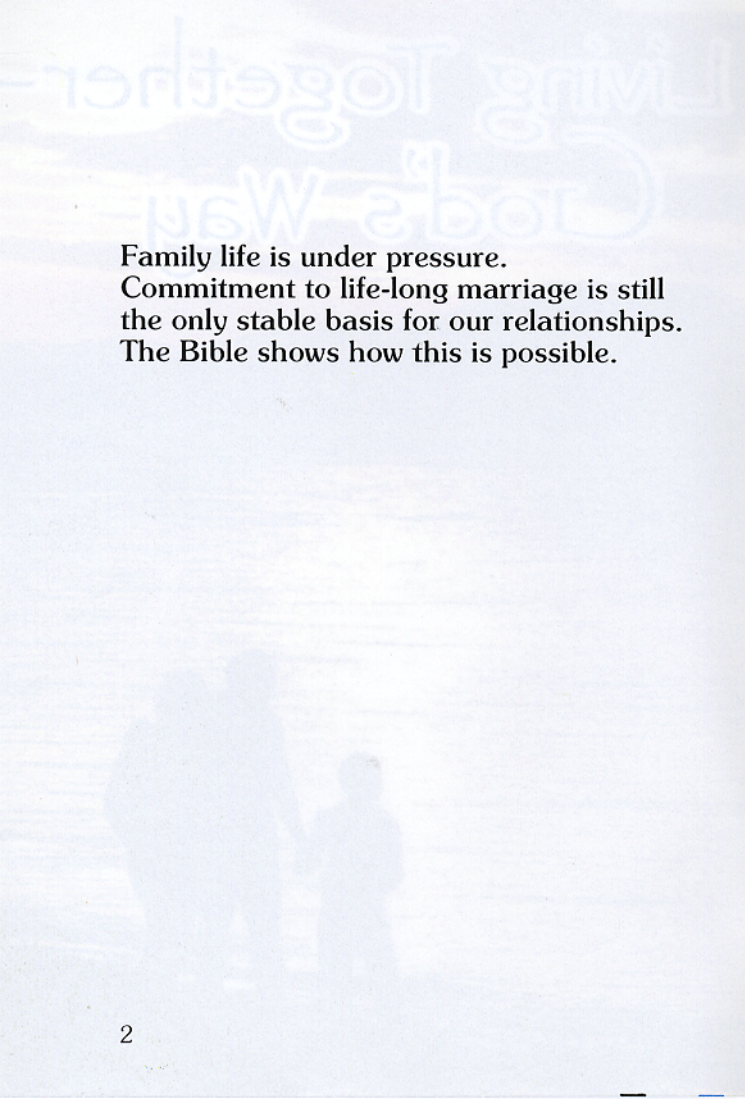


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Living Together- God's Way





**Family life is under pressure.
Commitment to life-long marriage is still
the only stable basis for our relationships.
The Bible shows how this is possible.**

Marriage is God's gift to us

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18

God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."

Genesis 1:27-28

Jesus Christ also said: "At the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one." Mark 10:6-8

Building the family

Strong marriages are built on the love Jesus shows

Jesus said: My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. John 15:12

Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church . . . Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:28-29, 33

Each partner has a responsibility to make the marriage strong:

Respect – not rights

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4

The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the

same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

1 Corinthians 7:3-4

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Peter 3:7

Forgiveness – not resentment

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:26, 31-32

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:13

Building the Family

Love – not anger

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Colossians 3:18-19

Marriage is a special relationship

It is built on complete faithfulness to each other

It is God's will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to live with his own wife in a way that is holy and honourable. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 (margin)

Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. 1 Corinthians 7:2

Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Hebrews 13:4

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who

unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

Marriage is for life

In God's sight: A married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

Romans 7:2-3

Divorce has never been part of God's best for us

Some Pharisees came to Jesus to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and

send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." Matthew 19:3-9

A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. "I hate divorce," says the Lord God.

Malachi 2:15-16

Healing the wounds

Married life may have its difficult patches. To admit this is not failure. Breakdown is not inevitable because with God there is always hope. He can strengthen us to face any situation.

God said: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:9

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7

We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Romans 5:3-5

A fresh start is possible

If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins,

O Lord, who could stand? But with you
there is forgiveness. Psalm 130:3-4

After his unfaithfulness King David wrote:
Have mercy on me, O God, according to
your unfailing love; according to your great
compassion blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me
from my sin. Create in me a pure heart, O
God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence or take
your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the
joy of your salvation and grant me a willing
spirit, to sustain me. Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12

Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are
weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am gentle and humble in heart, and
you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke
is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

Parents and children

Children are a gift from God – special in His sight

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. Mark 10:13-16

The Bible gives advice for bringing them up

Discipline is important . . .

Discipline your children while they are young enough to learn. If you don't, you are helping them to destroy themselves.

Proverbs 19:18

Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life. Proverbs 22:6

Discipline your son and you can always be proud of him. He will never give you reason to be ashamed. Proverbs 29:17

... but it must be exercised in an atmosphere of love

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. Colossians 3:21

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds . . . Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 11:18-19

Children also have responsibilities . . .

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother" — which is the first commandment

with a promise — "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Ephesians 6:1-3

Do what your father tells you, my son, and never forget what your mother taught you. Keep their words with you always, locked in your heart. Proverbs 6:20-21

... and these continue into adult life

If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 1 Timothy 5:8

Listen to your father; without him you would not exist. When your mother is old, show her your appreciation. Proverbs 23:22

Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:14-15

The family and prayer

Help is available in all these things. The Christian family can bring everything to God in prayer through Jesus Christ.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7, 19

Since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Jesus shows us how to pray

He said to His disciples,

“When you pray, say:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.

May your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,

for we also forgive everyone who sins
against us.

And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from the evil one.”

Luke 11:2-4 (margin)

Jesus needs to be at the heart of every family

A man once asked Christ's followers:

“What must I do to be saved?” They replied,
“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house . . . he was

filled with joy, because he had come to believe in God — he and his whole family.

Acts 16:30-32, 34

Jesus said: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love . . . I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

John 15:9-11

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