



Families Matter!

“ME AND MY FAMILY”

The Bible is God’s manual for the home. It not only defines the home as He wants it to be, but it also teaches all of the things that can create happy, faithful homes.

Let us decide to **learn and take a stand for the good things in God’s plan for the family.**

Here are five things that will help us to accomplish this goal:

Marriage Is Ordained of God

(Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6)

The clear teaching of the Bible is that God ordained marriage, that it was meant to involve one man and one woman, that it was meant to last for life, and that the only acceptable cause for divorce and remarriage is sexual unfaithfulness.

The world has chosen to follow many paths that are not in harmony with the plan of God, and none of those plans can possibly please Him “with whom we have to do” (Ecclesiastes 7:29; Malachi 2:13-16; Hebrews 4:12,13; 13:4).

Obedience Is a Good Word in the Home

(Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Peter 3:1,2)

Obedience is a lost art today. Children are seldom taught to obey parents, parents seldom obey God, and a lack of respect for other authorities (teachers, the law, bosses) dominates our land.

The first step to change this for the better would be for **adults** to accept their responsibility to obey God (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14; 1 John 5:3). This would give adults the basis for teaching the children that obedience is a **good** thing! And **that** means that **good rules** are **good** things!

A Spiritual Life Is Necessary

(Deuteronomy 6:5-9; 10:12,13 versus Romans 1:18-32; also Galatians 5:19-23)

Home and family can never be what God intended if

the people in the home do not accept the fact that we are made in the image of God—we are souls—souls who cannot find happiness apart from spiritual living. The soul must be recognized, fed, nurtured, and taught to love God totally.

The rampant fleshly living of our times is not working for our good! The reason for this is simple—it **cannot** work for our good because God will not allow it to do so (Galatians 6:7,8).

The ways of the flesh are antagonistic to the needs of the human soul. They end in eternal loss, while the spiritual life ends in eternal life (Matthew 7:13,14; 25:31-46).

Discipline Has Several Sides and One Key

(1 Samuel 3:13; Proverbs 23:13,14; 19:18)

The sides of discipline include:

- ♦ Learning (the word discipline comes from a Greek word that means “learner”).
- ♦ Example (the Bible is full of good and bad examples that can train us to be good).
- ♦ Practice (childhood is the best time to practice the things that will produce a good life).
- ♦ Correction (the Bible requires that we correct that which is wrong).

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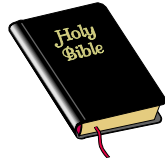
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Devotional Guide

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This devotional guide is based on the 12 Old Testament books that are commonly called the Minor Prophets. We will cover them in their probable chronological order. The readings are excerpts and the notes are brief statements about the contents.

1	Obadiah: Destruction of Edom	890 BC
2	Joel 2:12-17: Mercy of God	838 BC
3	Joel 2:28-32: Coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2	
4	Amos 1,2: Judgments on Israel and neighbors	810 BC
5	Amos 3:1-8: The Lord's word against Israel	
6	Amos 7:10-17: A false prophet's doom	
7	Amos 9:11-15: Prophecy of the church (Acts 15)	
8	Hosea 1:6-11: Rejection and hope	810 BC
9	Hosea 4:6-11: The consequences of no knowledge	
10	Hosea 5:1-7: The "power" of pride	
11	Hosea 8:5-11: Sowing leads to reaping	
12	Hosea 11:1: A prediction of Jesus (Mt 2:15)	
13	Hosea 14:4-9: A ray of hope	
14	Jonah 2:1-10: A prayer in a fish	800 BC
15	Jonah 3:1-10: A powerful sermon	
16	Micah 4:1-3: A prediction of the church (Acts 2)	720 BC
17	Micah 5:1-3: A prediction of Christ (Mt 2:5,6)	
18	Micah 6:6-9: What does the Lord require?	
19	Nahum 1:1-6: God is the judge of Nineveh	650 BC
20	Nahum 3:1-7: Woe to the bloody city!	
21	Zephaniah 3:8-20: Blessings for the remnant	620 BC
22	Habakkuk 3:1-19: The prophet's prayer	610 BC
23	Haggai 1:2-11: Set your heart on your ways	520 BC
24	Zechariah 2:1-13: God is a wall of fire about us	520 BC
25	Zechariah 3:6-10: Jesus is the BRANCH	
26	Zechariah 6:9-15: Jesus is the BRANCH	
27	Zechariah 9:9,10: Jesus' triumphal entry (Mt 21)	
28	Zechariah 11:10-13: The price of betrayal	
29	Zechariah 14:1-21: The destruction of Jerusalem (Mt 24:1-34)	
30	Malachi 3:8-12: Will a man rob God?	440 BC
31	Malachi 4:1-6: Jesus is the "Sun of righteousness"	



A Note for Men: Mordecai—A Great Example

How hard would it be to become the "Dad" for your young female cousin? How would you deal with it? How many eyebrows would raise in the community?

This exact event happened in the Bible story of Esther. Mordecai was placed in the position of serving as both parents for her!

And what a job he did! His convictions, decency, morality, courage, standards, and authority were presented to Esther. She learned, obeyed, and saved her people after being trained by this man.

(Continued from Page 1)

- ◆ Conviction (as time goes by, and principles are learned, we become convinced of their value).
- ◆ Explanation (being able to explain is a learned trait, too!).

The one key to all of the above is consistency! Be consistent in your overall plan of discipline for yourself and your children!

Be a Part of a Congregation That Understands

The church of Christ is the spiritual family of God (Ephesians 3:15; 1 Timothy 3:15). As such, it can **help** our homes—and it can be helped **by** our homes! So look for the church to understand—

- ◆ How important the home is.
- ◆ Your situation as a family unit of one or more people.
- ◆ That it needs you, too!
- ◆ The importance of your children.
- ◆ That the home is a part of the foundation of the church, the nation, and the future.

The New Testament is full of passages that stress the fact that home, church, and society are designed by God and that they are interrelated: Ephesians 5; 1 Timothy 3, 5, 6; 2 Timothy 1-4; Titus; Philemon; 1 Peter 1-5.

Let **me** learn and take a stand for the good things in

God's plan for our families.



A Note for Women: The Virtue of Virtue

Virtue is one of the characteristics of God (1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:3). He has called on us to learn and develop virtue (2 Peter 1:5).

So what is the virtue of virtue?

First, note the three elements of it from Proverbs 31:10-31. Virtue is made of duty (vv. 13-15), determination (vv. 16-20), and courage (vv. 21-27). This virtuous woman **was** virtuous because she exhibited all three elements of virtue in her life.

Second, note that virtue (sometimes called "moral courage") **is** virtuous because of the three components we just noted. In other words, virtue **is good by definition!**

Third, God's description of the virtuous woman is a picture of His ideal for women. If you are an adult woman, please imitate the woman of Proverbs 31. If you are a young girl, please memorize and follow the things that will make **you** virtuous. If you are **anyone** who can encourage **any** woman or girl to follow this path, please do so!

And then watch and see how her life turns out (vv. 28-31)!

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A Matching Puzzle About the Family of Esther

(Esther 1:1-9:32; KJV)

Write the letter in the blank that matches the statement.

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|---|--------------|
| _____ 1. King of Persia | A. Esther |
| _____ 2. Where the palace was | B. Haman |
| _____ 3. Queen who lost her throne | C. Ahasuerus |
| _____ 4. Cousin of Esther | D. Jewish |
| _____ 5. Became queen of Persia | E. Mordecai |
| _____ 6. Nationality of Mordecai and Esther | F. Vashti |
| _____ 7. Enemy of Mordecai | G. Purim |
| _____ 8. Days to be kept and remembered | H. Shushan |

Answers: 1-C; 2-H; 3-G; 4-E; 5-A; 6-D; 7-B;



A Note for Girls: Esther

The story of Esther is told in one entire book of the Old Testament. It is the book of Esther.

She was a Jewish girl who lived as one of the captives of the Persian Empire. The Persians had “inherited” the captives when they conquered Babylon (see Daniel 5). During the reign of Ahasuerus (Artaxerxes, 485-465 B.C.), Esther became queen of Persia!

As you read her story, pay attention to the things that you can use as examples for your own life.

- ◆ She decided to live right even though her parents were dead.
- ◆ She decided to obey Mordecai—who reared her—even though he was not her dad (he was her cousin).
- ◆ She was beautiful, but was modest in her beauty, never using it as a weapon to get her way.
- ◆ She was courageous.
- ◆ She relied on the providence of God.
- ◆ She took advice from Mordecai even after she became queen.
- ◆ She stood up against the powerful evil enemy of her people (Haman).
- ◆ She wisely planned for his downfall without doing evil.

We need girls who will decide early in life to be honorable, pure, dedicated, obedient, and useful in the purposes of God.

Will you be one of those girls?



A Question:

What queen lost her throne for refusing to display her beauty before the king and his friends?

An Answer: Vashti (see Esther 1)

A Note for Boys: Respect for Girls

I cannot think of anything more important to say to boys today than that you need to be respectful toward girls. Our society is becoming more and more involved with making sex objects of girls. From the earliest years, girls are being wrongly taught to think of their bodies as objects to show, display, and use to get somewhere. The best way to reverse this trend is for men and boys to realize how wonderful goodness, purity, modesty, and femininity really are. God did not mean for things to be the way that are today in our sex-crazed America.

Please choose to have high standards and to encourage the girls and women in your life to know that what you really appreciate in them is to see them living by the standards that are in the Bible!

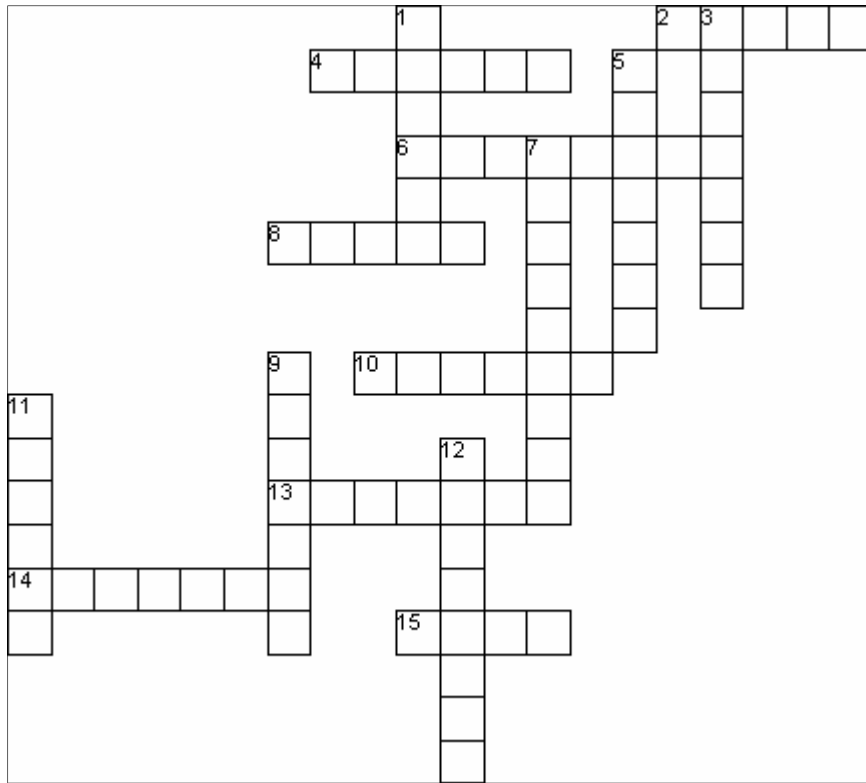
Respect—this is the key word in the title of this article. Do you know what it is? Please look it up, realize how important it is, and then demonstrate respect toward the opposite sex in order to encourage them toward virtue.



A Crossword Puzzle—The Family of Esther

(Esther 1:1-10:3; KJV)

Use the clues to find the words from the book of Esther.

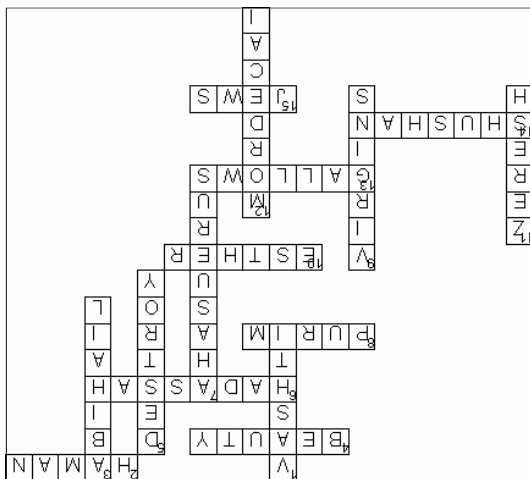


Across

- 2. Enemy of the Jews
- 4. What the king asked Vashti to show the people and the princes
- 6. Another name for Esther
- 8. Days remembered and kept
- 10. Chosen to be queen
- 13. Haman prepared this
- 14. The throne of the kingdom of Persia was here
- 15. Mordecai and Esther were this nationality

Down

- 1. Queen who lost her throne
- 3. Esther was his daughter
- 5. What Haman sought to do to the Jews
- 7. King of Persia
- 9. These were sought for the king
- 11. Haman's wife
- 12. A Jew who brought up his cousin Esther



A Quote for My Soul:

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

(Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

