



Series – **Home Improvement**

This series of talks is about applying God's principles into our home life. We'll discover practical ways of how to apply God's Word in making wise choices, handling anger, finances, conflict, and raising children. We will also discover the value of family, the meaning of love, and the power of forgiveness in the home.

Pt 1 - **Family Matters** - *"Creating Healthy Families"*

Whatever the makeup of our family, no-doubt we want it to be healthy. There are four simple ways how we can create and maintain healthy families.

...Healthy families have fun together

- It's good to have fun.

Proverbs 17:22 *(ceV) If you are cheerful, you feel good; if you are sad, you hurt all over.*

- Healthy families make fun. Fun doesn't just happen. It has to be a conscious decision and making fun often needs preparation.
- Parents need to model fun for their kids.
- In many western families kids and teenagers rely on some type of screen for entertainment and fun.
- This in itself is not evil or necessarily wrong but if it becomes a habit it doesn't create a sense of togetherness rather caters more for the child to withdraw from the family.
- The busier we are as parents the more this type of withdrawal of our kids into the cyber-world goes unchecked.
- Busyness can be a fun killer!
- Fun is usually the first thing to go out of the home when the busy schedule dictates our movements and time frames.

Some ideas to bring fun come back into our home and family;

- Schedule some fun times.
- Do the unexpected.
- Make everyday things fun.

...Healthy families give attention to one another

- Selfishness causes us to focus on ourselves first and to lose sight of others and their needs.
- Jesus modelled for us how to put other people first.

Philippians 2:2-4 (ncv) *When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble and give more honour to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.*

Philippians 2:5-7 (cev) *Think the same way that Christ Jesus thought: Christ was truly God. But He did not try to remain equal with God. Instead He gave up everything and became a slave, when He became like one of us.*

Romans 12:10 (esv) *Love one another with brotherly affection, outdo one another in showing honour.*

Galatians 6:3 (nlt) *If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.*

Some ideas of how to give focussed attention to family members;

- Value one another's point of view.
- Look for opportunities to serve one another.

...Healthy families inspire one another

- Healthy families verbally inspire and encourage one another.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ncv) *So encourage each other and give each other strength...*

- Another word for strengthening is to build up, to fortify, to make strong.
- Some people find it hard giving verbal encouragement to others because they never received any from within their family of origin or at school.
- Some have a hard time giving any verbal encouragement because their hearts are in the wrong place.

Matthew 12:35 (tlb) *A good man's speech reveals the rich treasures within him and an evil hearted man is filled with venom and his speech reveals it.*

- Jesus is saying here, the words that come out of our mouth are a reflection of what's happening in our heart and thought life.
- Everyone wants to be encouraged. Be liberal with our praise of others, inspiring them to be all they can be and to feel good about themselves.

Some ideas to bring fun come back into our home and family;

- Look for family members doing things right and let them know.
- Guard our words because words can hurt.

Proverbs 12:8a (ncv) *Careless words stab like a sword...*

What we may say in a relaxed or flippant moment can lodge in the heart of a person and it can never be forgotten.

- Send cards or letters of encouragement in the mail.
- Speak well of our children in front of others.

...Healthy families love unconditionally

John 13:34 (nlt) *So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.*

- Healthy families love without conditions.
- Contractual love says, *"You fulfil your end of the agreement and I'll reward you with love."*
- Contractual love gives us as parents, power.
- Contractual loves develops our children into becoming performers. Performers become people pleasers.
- People pleasers wind up giving up their identity, their morality, and their values in order to please other people. It's a negative cycle.
- The Bible is filled with descriptions on the character of God who says *"I love you."* God's unconditional love towards you and me is called covenant love.
- God made a covenant with the Israelites that said, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."* (Deuteronomy 31:6,8)
- We can't escape God's love. His love never weakens for us. He loves us unconditionally and this is the love covenant he has made with us.
- Healthy couples and families love without conditions.

Some ideas of how to love family members unconditionally;

- Love through our words.
- Love through our actions.

- Love through a permanent attitude of forgiveness.
- **C.S. Lewis** said *"We all agree that forgiveness is a beautiful idea until we have to practice it."*

Matthew 18:21-22 (ceV) *Peter came up to the Lord and asked, "How many times should I forgive someone who does something wrong to me? Is seven times enough?" Jesus answered: Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times!*

- Jesus wants us to develop a habit of forgiveness.

Colossians 3:13 (nlt) *You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

...Take home point

Healthy relationships are all about finding a happy balance between the busyness of life and the quality time given to the people who mean most to us!