



## Keys to Family Unity

**May 13, 2019**

**Texts:** Genesis 33:12-14, Ruth 1:16-18, John 17:21-26, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 2:11-22, 5:21-6:9

When kids are little, who tends to shoulder the burden of childcare more—dads or moms? In a recent student opinion piece by Jeremy Engle in the *New York Times* titled, “How Do Your Parents Share the Responsibility of Parenting?” Engle asks, “Who makes sure the children get up in the morning and are dressed for school? Which parent does the cooking? The cleaning? The lawn mowing? Vacation planning? Who helps with homework and school applications? Is there equality in your home? Or is there still an unequal division of labor?” [1]

Quoting from an article by Darcy Lockman titled, “What ‘Good’ Dads Get Away With,” Engle points out that there has been a lot of verbal commitment by fathers to help with household and parenting responsibilities, but not a lot of follow-through. Even though father’s involvement with childcare and home duties rose in the 1980s and 1990s, it still is not in parity with moms.

Lockman states, “Division of labor in the home is one of the most important gender-equity issues of our time. Yet at the current rate of change, MenCare, a group that promotes equal involvement in caregiving, estimates that it will be about 75 more years before men worldwide assume half of the unpaid work that domesticity requires.” [ibid.]

This week’s Sabbath school, “Keys to Family Unity,” addresses the issue of equality by applying Bible principles to family relationships. For instance, when we place Christ in the center of our homes, walls of division between members will come down and there will be unselfish interest on the part of all to serve, regardless of gender or position in the family.

Unity cannot happen without self-sacrificing love toward one another, a quality that can only come from unity with Jesus who said, “Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12, NIV). Reading through 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 is a practical way to measure the genuine quality of your love toward others.

Wednesday’s lesson on submission especially guides family members to balance their roles with unselfish love. While responsibilities may change through the various seasons of a family’s growth, the equal love and care for all members of the household should never change. When life is difficult, we will not complain, “It’s not my job,” but will lean in to help wherever needed. It’s a principle that brings family unity.

Don’t wait 75 years to take out the garbage.

~Curtis Rittenour

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[1] <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/08/learning/how-do-your-parents-share-the-responsibilities-of-parenting.html>

## For Reflection

**Connecting:** Draw a picture of a scale that shows the balance (or imbalance) of home responsibilities in your home of origin. Write down examples of “jobs” that were covered by your caregivers or parents. How did this affect your life?

**Sharing:** Choose one type of relationship in your life in which you experience equality and balance. Explain how this happens. Then choose a relationship in which you experience imbalance. Why is this so?

1. Parent and child
2. Husband and wife
3. Employer and employee
4. Church leader and church member
5. Friend and friend
6. Other...

**Applying:** Make a list of “home responsibilities.” Come up with at least 10 examples (doing the laundry, vacuuming, childcare if you have children, washing the car, cooking, etc.). Then mark down who currently cares for those items. Now reflect on what changes could bring more balance in the home.

**Valuing:** Inequality in our relationships can bring frustration and even pain. If you have brought hurt to another through a lack of unselfish help in your home, pray with another person and confess your need for help from God to bring unity to your family.

## Welcome to Sharing Scripture

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**Connecting:** a question or two that moves you from personal experience into the Bible

**Sharing:** digging deeper into Scripture and understanding what it means

**Applying:** experimenting in fun and interactive ways, making the Biblical concepts work for you

**Valuing:** a call to action in your life as God is prompting you to respond

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