

Fathers' Studies: Family Responsibilities

"...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

LESSON 48 OF 52

IN-LAW RELATIONSHIPS

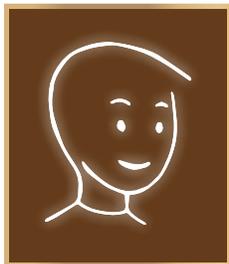
LESSON AIM: To discover ways of getting along with the in-laws.

KEY VERSE:

1. **Exodus 18:7, 24** Moses respected Jethro his father-in-law. When Jethro gave Moses his advice, Moses _____.
2. **1 Samuel 18:20-21** When David became son-in-law to _____, he brought some problems into his household.
3. **Genesis 26:34-35** Isaac and Rebekah's daughters-in-law were from tribes who had different beliefs. This caused a lot of _____ for Isaac and Rebekah.
4. **Ruth 2:11-12** Boaz praised Ruth for what she had done for _____.

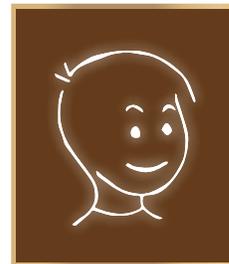
PERSONAL NOTES:

For You To Do



By Yourself

Husbands often have trouble getting along with their mothers-in-law. How about you? Do you owe your mother-in-law an apology or a thank-you note? Give it to her today.

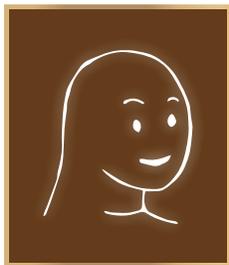


With Your Wife

Are your parents good friends with her parents? Sit down and plan ways of getting your parents together so that they can learn to know each other better.

With Your Children

Read to them the story of Ruth and her mother-in-law (Ruth 1-4). Start teaching them that when they get married they will have a second set of parents to love and honour.



IN-LAW RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON 48 OF 52

Mother-in-law jokes are common today. The joke-makers see the mother-in-law as bossy and hard to get along with. This kind of mother-in-law especially wants to protect her daughter against the man she married.

But it does not have to be this way in a family. Your parents-in-law can be your best friends. Here are some ways that a husband can build good relationships with his in-laws and strengthen his marriage at the same time.

LEAVE YOUR PARENTS. Leave her parents too. Get a place of your own where you can manage your own family life. Most parents are tempted to control their children's lives even after they are married. Leaving helps to prevent this. Leaving physically will give each family a place to live. Leaving emotionally means that both families feel good about this new arrangement. When you really leave your parents, you do not stop loving and helping them. What leaving means is that now your marriage comes first before any other family ties.

DO NOT COMPARE. A wife is hurt when her husband says things like, "This pie doesn't taste as good as my mother's," or "Your folks are lazy; why don't they work like mine?". This makes her feel that she must prove herself to be as good as her in-laws. Comparisons can destroy the spirit of a marriage.

DO NOT ATTACK WITH WORDS. Damage done with words can be very deep. Do not criticize your wife's family. Praise them and build them up. If they do have problems, deal with them in private, not publicly.

DO NOT PLAY FAVOURITES. Treat your family and your wife's family equally. Visit them equally. Have them in your house equally. Talk of them on equal terms.

FORGIVE—DO NOT HOLD GRUDGES. Sometimes, no matter what you do, a problem may arise between your families. Talk with them about it. If that does not solve the problem, ask God to help you forgive.

EXODUS 18, RUTH 1-4, 1 SAMUEL 18

**YOU MUST BE KIND TO EACH OTHER. THINK OF THE OTHER PERSON.
FORGIVE OTHER PEOPLE JUST AS GOD FORGAVE YOU. (EPHESIANS 4:32)**

The marriage relationship comes before any other family ties.

Comparing can destroy the spirit of a marriage.

Use words to build up, not tear down.

Treat in-laws equally.

Forgive where wrong has been done.

WINDOW TO LIFE

Alvin lived with his parents until he was past 20. Then he married a girl from another village. They built a small cabin near his parents' home and lived in it. Alvin's mother kept trying to run things in Alvin's life. She never let go of her son emotionally. Alvin's wife was upset by all this and became quite depressed. She wanted to leave Alvin and go back to her own home.

After a few months, Alvin's mother saw that she should not run the life of her son and his wife. Alvin also saw that he needed to act more like a grown up son toward his mother. Alvin, his mother, and his wife began to talk more openly to each other about their problems. Life became happier for all three of them.

