

No. 8 Fulfilling the Law of Christ in the Family (Local elder)

Note to speaker:

This talk includes a scripted demonstration. Explain how marriage mates and parents can imitate Jesus' example in their families. Warmly encourage them not to give up in fulfilling the law of Christ.

FULLY FILL THE LAW OF CHRIST BY IMITATING CHRIST'S LOVE (1 min.)

When describing our times, the Bible foretold that many would have "no natural affection" or, as one translation reads, would "lack normal affection for their families" (2Ti 3:1-4)

Instead of imitating the world, we can fulfill the law of Christ in our family by imitating Jesus' tender way of dealing with others (Mt 11:29)

HUSBANDS AND WIVES—IMITATE HOW CHRIST TREATED OTHERS (4 min.)

A husband should show unfading love for his wife. [Read Ephesians 5:25]

Jesus' disciples were imperfect, but he valued them, expressed appreciation for their good qualities, and gave his life for them (w16.08 14 ¶3)

A husband who imitates Christ treats his wife with love and understanding, demonstrating in word and deed that he cherishes her (Eph 5:28, 29)

A wife should respect her husband and submit to his headship [Read Ephesians 5:22, 23]

Although having wisdom, power, and authority, Jesus submits to his Father's headship (1Co 11:3)

A wife who imitates Christ expresses her thoughts and feelings respectfully; yet, she willingly yields to her husband's decisions when these do not conflict with God's laws (w16.08 14 ¶4)

Disagreements can make it difficult to show love and respect

When determining how to deal with family problems, married Christians do not allow local culture to override Bible principles (w11 2/1 7)

Christians do not use angry speech—or worse, violence—to deal with problems; rather, they imitate Christ's mildness and humility (w13 5/15 17-18 ¶13-15)

PARENTS—IMITATE HOW CHRIST TRAINED OTHERS (4 min.)

Provide balanced discipline

When Christ corrected his apostles, he did so mildly and patiently (Mr 9:33-37; Lu 22:24-27)

Jesus was a loving shepherd, not someone who rigidly insisted on numerous rules

Parents need to provide loving correction (Pr 29:15; Col 3:21; w15 11/15 4-5 ¶3-6)

Parents should not discipline their children in a fit of anger or belittle them with hurtful sarcasm

Show affection

Jesus showed warm affection for young children (Mr 10:16)

In doing so, he imitated his own Father, who expressed approval of him (Mr 1:11)

Do not let your upbringing, personality, or culture keep you from expressing your love for your children

Help your child reason on Bible principles

Jesus patiently helped his disciples to reason on godly principles (Mt 6:26)

As children mature, parents wisely train them to use their "powers of discernment" so that the children can make good decisions on their own [Read Hebrews 5:13, 14]

In the following demonstration, notice how a father responds to a request from his son

DEMONSTRATION (4 min.)

[Note: Please adhere closely to the script. Rehearse thoroughly so that the demonstration will be natural and conversational. It should not be comical or overly dramatic. The son should be in his mid-to-late teens. Both participants should be exemplary, and the father should have a fine reputation as a family head. If the sport mentioned in the demonstration is not played in your area, please substitute another]

****[A father is sitting at a table, working on his laptop. There are several books, including a Bible, on the table. An extra chair is nearby]****

Son: **[Enters the stage and begins talking excitedly] Dad! You'll never guess what happened today! The basketball coach asked me to try out for the school team!**

Father: Wow! **[More seriously] But . . . you told him no, right?**

Son: **[Hesitating] Well . . . not exactly. I told him I'd have to get back to him.**

Father: **[Curtly] Look, we've been over this before. Being on a school team would take too much time away from spiritual activities. Plus, think of the bad association!**

Son: **[Pleading] But I'm not a child anymore. I think I can make it work. Can't I at least *try* it?**

Father: **[Frustrated] Definitely not! I don't have time to debate this. You *know* the answer's no.**

Son: **[Whining and insistent] But *why*?**

Father: **[Authoritatively, firmly] Because I said so! End of discussion! ****[Returns to what he was doing]******

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Son: ***[Muttering dejectedly]*** I never get to do anything. ***[Hanging his head, he walks offstage slowly]***

Speaker: How might the father in this demonstration have helped his son sharpen his “powers of discernment”? Let’s look at another way of handling the situation

Son: ***[Enters the stage and begins talking excitedly]*** Dad! You’ll never guess what happened today! The basketball coach asked me to try out for the school team!

Father: Wow! I’m not surprised, though—you play well. ***[More seriously]*** What did you tell him?

Son: ***[Hesitating]*** Well . . . I told him I’d have to get back to him.

Father: ***[Warmly]*** That’s good! It’s wise not to give a hasty response. ***[Gestures toward the nearby chair]*** Have a seat.

Son: OK. ***[Sits, and continues talking earnestly]*** So I know that we’ve talked about school sports before and that they can present a spiritual danger. But I’m not a child anymore. If it interferes with meetings or service, I’ll just quit. Can I just try it?

Father: ***[Thoughtfully]*** Would that be the best way to decide what to do? ***[Hands his son the Bible]*** Why don’t you read Proverbs 14:15?

Son: ***[Reads Proverbs 14:15]***

Father: Thanks. So, according to this verse, what does a shrewd person do?

Son: It says he “ponders each step.”

Father: Right! He ponders, or thinks deeply, about what he is about to do. Think of it this way: If you have to cross a busy street, when do you look for oncoming cars—before or after you step into the road?

Son: Before, of course.

Father: Exactly. So if you’re wondering whether to join the team at school, when should you think deeply about the possible consequences—before or after you join?

Son: ***[Sincere]*** I see what you mean. I should think about possible problems now instead of jumping in and trying to make it work. ***[Pauses briefly, thinking]*** But it’s impossible to know *all* of the problems that might come up, isn’t it?

Father: That’s true. However, before buying something expensive, wouldn’t you try to gather as much information as you could about it? You would find out what others who bought the item think about it. And you would do research to make sure it’s well made, wouldn’t you?

Son: Yeah, of course.

Father: So how could you apply the same principle here, to an activity that could cost you a lot of time?

Son: ***[Slowly]*** Well, I guess I could talk to others who have been on a school team and . . . do more research about potential dangers.

Father: ***[Warmly]*** Very good!

Son: Were you ever asked to play any sports in school?

Father: ***[Chuckles]*** No. In fact, coaches at school would probably have begged me *not* to play. But why don’t you ask Brother Smith at the meeting this week? Before he became a Witness, he played basketball on a university team.

Son: ***[Shocked]*** Wow! I didn’t know that!

Father: I’m sure he’ll give you a realistic picture of what it was like. In the meantime, why don’t you do some research on recreation and school sports? You can present your research at family worship this week. I’ll pretend to be you and ask to join the team, and you’ll have to explain to me, based on Bible principles, whether it’s a good idea or not.

Son: OK, that sounds great. Thanks for hearing me out, Dad!

Speaker: In both of these scenarios, the son will probably not join the basketball team. However, in the second demonstration, the father taught his son how to make a wise decision that will be pleasing to Jehovah

YOU CAN FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST IN YOUR FAMILY (1 min.)

Despite the world’s influence and the stresses of daily life, Christian family members treat one another in a kind and loving way

Review question: How can marriage mates and parents fulfill the law of Christ in their family?

Answer: Ephesians 5:22, 23, 25; Hebrews 5:13, 14; by treating their mate with love and respect and by training their children to reason on Bible principles

Be assured that your efforts to imitate Jesus’ example will be richly blessed! (Ga 6:9)

(Speaker does not need to read or comment on every cited text)