

MESSAGE


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THE HUMAN FAMILY

IS THERE A FUTURE?

the prescription diet
a strategy for curbing
sickness, enjoying life, and
living a long time is explored

a new rule
a fresh contemporary look
at the golden rule



"DEAR, I'VE BEEN THINKING. WE'VE BEEN MARRIED FOR MANY YEARS, AND I THINK we know each other quite well now. We each know what makes the other happy, and that's a good thing. I know that you love me with all that you are, and I hope you know that I love you, too. I mean no harm by what I'm getting ready to ask, but I want you to know me a little better. Will you do me a small favor? When I call you, would you say something such as 'Yes, honey?' instead of 'What?' I know you'll do this for me since we love each other so much. Right?"

What we have just read is a caring husband's sharing with his wife one simple thing that would make him happy and help the relationship to grow if his wife would respond favorably. Wouldn't it be a shame if the wife responded instead by shouting, "Does it really matter? Why are you being so petty with me?"

P A R T T W O

what's LOVE got to do with it?

BY L. DAVID HARRIS

Sometimes people in committed relationships take their loved ones for granted. They think it doesn't really matter whether they do one thing or neglect to do another, especially if they think it's small. What is small to you may be a big deal to someone else.

Sometimes we respond the same way in our relationship with God. When the love of Jesus lives in our hearts, He empowers us to respond to Him with love. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

In the previous issue we briefly examined the positive effects of love on both our physical and spiritual health. We found that those experiencing true love derived great benefits from it and said, "What a shame it would be to miss out on such love." The question we must address in this issue is whether it really matters how we respond to the one we claim to love as long as we proclaim that we love them. The bottom line is that if I am unwilling to please my loved one in little things, it is partly because I am selfish, and as a result the relationship is in deep trouble.

In *Marriage Partnership* magazine, Winter 1997, Les Parrott, Ph.D., and Leslie Parrott, Ed.D., wrote the following: "The problem with focusing on yourself, no matter how subtle, is that it cuts the heart out of marriage. We can rationalize our selfish ways all we want, but we are missing the point of our partnership when we don't pitch in and help with the

task at hand. Subtle selfishness is guaranteed to leave you feeling more like roommates than soul mates. What's worse, it brings conflict. 'For those who are self-seeking,' Scripture says, . . . 'there will be wrath and anger' (Romans 2:8, NIV). *Spats and tiffs are inevitable whenever we squander kindness and give in to self-absorption." This shows that even subtle selfishness is certain to kill a relationship. It is just a matter of time.

THE FIRST FAMILY Did you know that Adam and Eve comprised the very first family? I know that usually we do not think of a family as just two members, but they were. What was unique about their family was that God was their Father, and they saw Him whenever they wanted. Wouldn't it be great if that were the case today? Can you imagine how successful families would be if each one would seek Him daily? One major reason we do not see Him face to face anymore is because Adam and Eve decided to ignore their Loved One—God—when He shared with them one little thing He wanted them to pay close attention to. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:15-17). This is amazing. If you read before and after these verses, you will find that God gave Adam everything that his heart could desire, including the tree of life. Sometime after the command not to eat from the tree of the

Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:14-17). The Bible says that if we love God, we will want to keep His commandments. Not only will we desire to keep them, but He will send the Holy Spirit to live inside of us so we can keep them exactly as they are. The first four, which are our focus this issue, are about our love for God. If we love God, we will not put anything or anyone before Him. If we love Him, we will not worship anything or any-



does it really matter?

knowledge of good and evil, God also gave Adam a beautiful wife to help complete him. What more could he want? If he had not disobeyed by eating from the tree, everything would have been fine. One would think that love for God would keep Adam and Eve from eating from that one tree. But as the story continues we see that they disobeyed the one they loved and severely damaged their relationship with Him.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? There are many who think God does not really care what we do as long as we generally obey Him. My question to such an individual is "How small is eating a piece of fruit?" Adam and Eve did not kill anyone; they just ate some fruit. God gave a clear command, and love should have inspired them to obey, especially since the matter was so small.

Does it matter to God whether we obey His commandments or not? "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the

one in His place. If we love God, we will not misuse His holy name. If we love Him, we will keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath and know that no other day will do.

The wonderful thing about loving God and keeping the commandments is that He gives us the power we need to do it, and then rewards us with what Jesus is worthy of. Now, that's love, and now we know the little things do matter.

In part three (in the next issue), "What's Love Got to Do With It? Am I My Brother's Keeper?" we will briefly discuss how accepting God's love for us helps us relate to our fellow human beings. Until then, remember that God loves you.

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